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AN **EDITOR'S** OVERVIEW

A Little Help From My Friends

If I may borrow a few words from John, Paul, George, and Ringo, "I get by with a little help from my friends." In fact, I've lived by that philosophy for most, if not all, of my life. In my experience I've learned that being a team player is very rewarding. In fact, it's the key to getting any job done effectively.

When I first started playing drums, everything started falling into place when my childhood friends and I started our band Mantus. As a team we had some success through the '70s, scoring three top-10 dance singles, landing some national TV spots, and touring. What made the experience even more special was that I shared it with my best friends—who, I'm proud to say, are *still* my closest friends some thirty years later.

Through the '80s and '90s, I was fortunate to be able to take the accomplishments and friendships I developed over the years and turn them into opportunities to play on hundreds of recordings. One week it might be the result of one of my buddies producing a triple-platinum record. Another week, a friend might be engineering a TV session, or playing a live gig. In each case, I could never have done it alone.

Which leads me to here and now. By the time I came to work for *Modern Drummer*, almost six years ago, I had friends here that I had known for more than ten years. Again, I was blessed to become part of a wonderful family who knew the importance of working as a team. And remember, it works both ways—if one is lucky enough to have great friends, hopefully one is smart enough to *be* one as well. To this day I'm still learning and hopefully passing on my knowledge in a positive way as a friend.

So cherish your close friends, and be the best friend you can be, because in the end, no one does it alone. We *all* get by with a little help from our friends.

MODERN DRUMMER

Volume 28, Number 6

The World's Most Widely Read Drum Magazine

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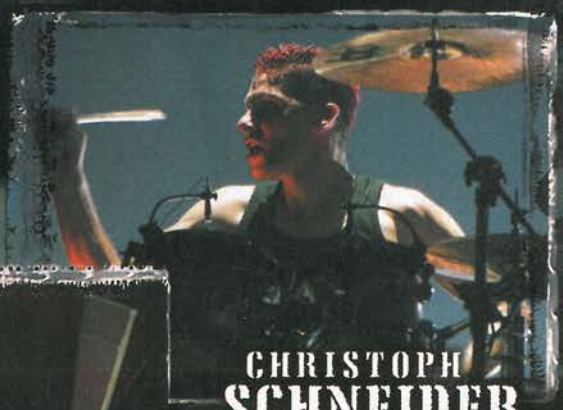

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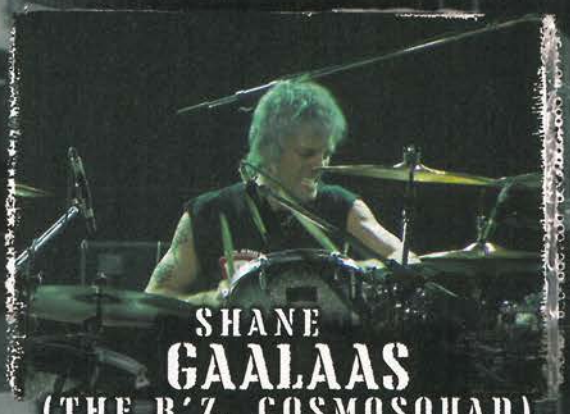

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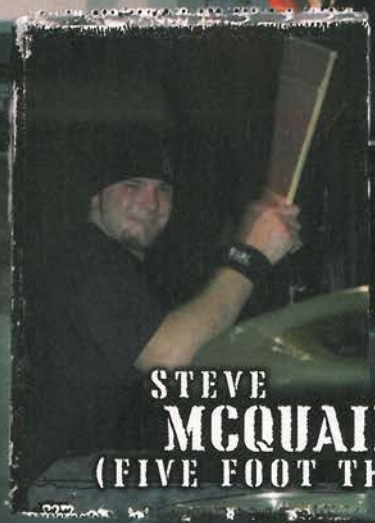

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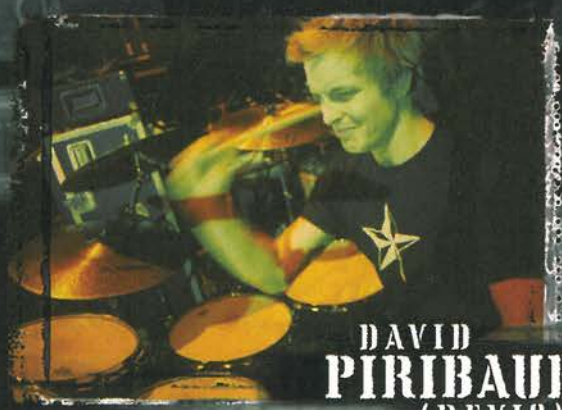

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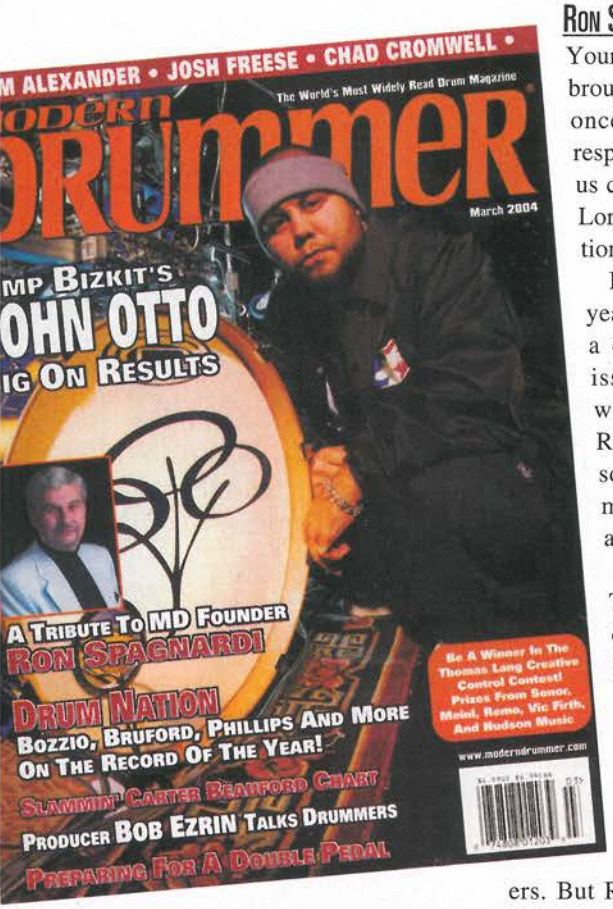


Ron Spagnardi Tribute

Your March tribute to Ron Spagnardi brought a tear to my eye more than once. The outpouring of love and respect for Ron and his kinship for us came shining through. Isabel and Lori should be proud of the international family Ron has created.

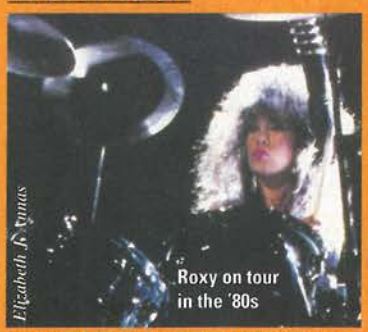
I've been a subscriber for many years, and I still feel like a kid in a candy store when each new issue arrives. I'm sure that *MD* will continue—in the sprit of Ron's vision—to be the foremost source of information for drummers around the world to read and share. **John Gigante**

Though I never had the honor of meeting Ron, I have unquestionably learned more about drumming from him than I have from all of my other percussion instructors combined. And I have a masters degree in music education! It's not that I didn't have good teachers. But Ron's way of teaching (through *MD*) has had a greater impact on me than anything or anyone else has.

I never got to thank Ron, so I will thank Isabel and the *MD* staff for continuing to share in his dream. I figure the best way I can repay you is to renew my subscription until I can't read anymore. I started reading *MD* when I was twelve, and I'm about to turn thirty-two. I'll take another twenty years of Ron's legacy, please. **Danny Lloyd**

While the passing of Ron Spagnardi is a tragedy, the growth of his creation—*Modern Drummer* magazine—surely represents one of the great American success stories. The original and subsequent issues of *MD* are highly prized in my collection, and I've used much information from them with my students. Some of those students have become subscribers themselves. Several of them—along with the parents of still others—have mentioned that reading *MD* not only improved their drumming, but also enhanced their language-reading skills, thus allowing them to advance in various school programs. Certainly this is a legacy that could not have been envisioned in the first *MD* issue. The Spagnardi family and the *MD* staff may take comfort in this educational process. **Tracy Borst**

Roxy's Perspective


Roxy on tour in the '80s

Elizabeth Lennas

"Hey, you're really good—for a girl!"

There once was a time when that comment would make my skin crawl. I was flying at 30,000 feet and 400 miles per hour with my hair on fire. I was young and sure of myself, so the typical response from this atypical female rock drummer was, "What kind of back-handed compliment is *that*?"

The music industry is a living, breathing machine, seeking the next moment of perfection like a visit to the local 31 Flavors, only to find another flavor the next month. But true perfection is a particular time and place, and for that time and that place we were Vixen, and we *were* perfect. We were "living in the now," on the road with icons like Ozzy, KISS, Deep Purple, and The Scorpions. Jetting around the world with groupies in tow, we were making the most of our proverbial fifteen minutes of fame.

The lucky can stretch those fifteen minutes into an hour, the legends into forever. Others have to give everything they've got to simply hold on. It's been said that you can measure someone's character by how high they bounce when toppling from such dizzying heights. The point is: I've learned that you shouldn't strive to be the perfect musician for one particular place and time. Instead, set your goal to be a really good musician for *any* place and time. Be a legend.

Today, I'm still flying at 30,000 feet and 400 miles per hour with my hair on fire. I still have my health. I have my own Web site (www.roxypertrucci.com), and life is fun. Looking down from these heights, some of my dreams and accomplishments look pretty small. True, there was a time when the world seemed to revolve around me like that ball of fire in the sky. But now if you say to me, "Hey, you're really good—for a girl," the typical response from this atypical female drummer is, "Yes I am, and thank you for noticing."

Roxy today

Roxy Petrucci

Bob Ezrin And BJ Wilson

It was eminently cool of legendary producer Bob Ezrin to declare his admiration for the late and sorely missed Barrie (BJ) Wilson in your March *Different View* article. BJ's amazing drumming with Procol Harum filled my head as a kid. I was lucky enough to see him perform live once, which further astonished me. All modern drummers would do well to give this rock mastermind a listen. **Peter Hartbarger**

John Guerin

I was very saddened to learn of John Guerin's passing. I urge any drummer who hasn't heard John's amazing and extensive work to give it a listen.

Back in 1975 I bought an album called *Tom Cat* by Tom Scott & The L.A. Express, because I thought the cover looked really cool. At that time, Buddy Rich and Louie Bellson were still big, Billy Cobham was just hitting his stride, and Neil Peart was showing America how hot Canada could be. While I idolized those drumming masters, most of what they were playing was way beyond my comprehension. But John Guerin's drumming on that L.A. Express album touched something inside me. When I started teaching drums, I dropped that album on just about every student I had. "Listen to this," I'd say. "Hear the taste, the chops, the serving of the music."

When I found that album again on CD a few years ago, it had a sticker that said, "Classic '70s Fusion." An accurate moniker, perhaps, especially considering the "cardboard box" drum tuning that was big at the time. But John's *playing* sounds as fresh and creative as any contemporary music that's been recorded since. **Michael Camero**

How To Reach Us

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Timbale Instruction Sources

I grew up listening to Hispanic music, and I've always loved the sound of timbales. This past Christmas my wife gave me a set. Can you recommend some CDs, videos, or DVDs to help me learn to play them? **Paul**

One terrific source of information is *Drumming With The Mambo King*, a book/CD package by Tito Puente and Jim Payne. It includes Latin rhythms and patterns applicable to timbales *and* drumset. It's published by Hal Leonard, and is available in bookstores, drumshops, and various online sources.

Hal Leonard Publications offers a great video called *Glen Caruba—The Contemporary Percussionist*. It's a complete look at the use of timbales, congas, bongos, djembe, and percussion "toys" in a musical setting. Check it out at www.halleonard.com.

Latin Percussion, Inc. offers some excellent CDs and videos. One that might serve your needs is *Adventures In Rhythm Vol. 2: Richie Garcia On Bongos/Timbales*. Check out LP's Web site, www.lpmusic.com, for details.

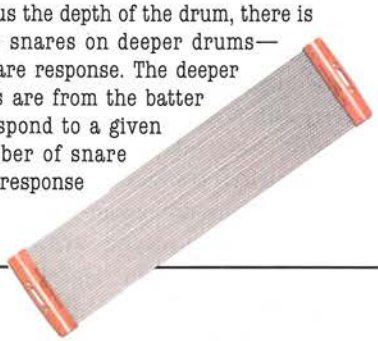
You may also be interested in some titles in the Warner Bros. video/DVD catalog, including a recent one called *Just Another Day In The Park*. It features Raul Rekow and Karl Perazzo of Santana. Check out www.warnerbrospublications.com for that and other titles that may interest you.

Snare Wires

I have some questions about snare wires. To begin with, what makes a set of $50 "custom" snares different from a $10 set of generic snares? Also, is there a correlation between depth of drum and width of snares? For example, I took my 6½x14 snare drum to a local shop, and the drum salesman there said that I'd never get the full sound of the drum without 42-strand snare wires. He maintained that standard 18-strand wires weren't "effective" on a drum as deep as a 6½". What's your opinion? **Gregg**

As is the case with many aspects of drum sound, some of the difference in snare-wire performance is in the ear of the beholder. However, there are some quantifiable differences. These include the composition of the metal and its sonic characteristics, the quality of the manufacturing (soldering jobs, equal tension of individual wires, smooth edges, etc.), and in some cases the means of attachment (special cable, special tape, or fabric strips). How *much* difference this all makes is a matter of judgement based on experimentation.

As for the width of snare wires versus the depth of the drum, there is something to be said for using wider snares on deeper drums—assuming that you *want* maximum snare response. The deeper the shell, the farther away the snares are from the batter head, and the less the snares can respond to a given stick impact. By increasing the number of snare wires, you gain back some or all of the response that was lost.



Drum Booth Problems

Bob Gatzen's November '03 article about creating a practice space led me to write to you about an issue I'm having with my own practice space. It's an 8x10 drum booth with a 6'-high ceiling, just big enough for me and my set. For years, I've been wearing earplugs for all of my practicing, since the volume level inside the booth is very high. But I have a custom drumkit on order, and I don't want to wear earplugs *all* of the time.

Would covering the walls and ceiling with carpeting cut down on the volume? Also, I want to be able to play along with CDs, but headphones never seem to be loud enough, and a separate speaker would be too big to fit inside the booth. Any ideas would be greatly appreciated. **Dan Goldfedder**

Since Bob Gatzen's article inspired your question, we asked Bob for his response. He replies, "Carpeting will decrease low frequencies (like the bass drum), which can be just as harmful as high volume levels. However, this won't solve your monitoring problem. I suggest you consider purchasing a couple of mic's and a small mixer. There are many choices, so you should probably go online and check out a few sites.

"Shure offers a wide variety of mic's at an equally wide range of prices. These include the famous SM-57, which is very commonly used on toms and snare drums. They also make a great stereo overhead mic' called the VP-88, but it's a bit pricey. If you can afford to spend between $500 and $1,000, I suggest you pick up the VP-88 and a small mixer. Mackie makes a 12-channel mini-mixer that sounds great. I'm not sure of the street price; my guess is around $300. If you can spring for an SM-57 (under $100 in most places), you can use it on the snare and the bass drum by positioning it under the snare drum, facing downwards towards the floor. This way it will pick up the back head of the bass drum as well as plenty of snare sound. The overhead will handle your toms and cymbals.

"If your budget is tight, hold off on the VP-88 and pick up another SM-57 to use as your overhead. When you can afford a better-quality overhead mic', the second SM-57 can be used elsewhere on the kit. You can never have enough SM-57s.

"Put the drum mic's and your music source (CD, mp3, I-POD, etc.) into separate channels in your mixer, so that you can balance their individual volumes. Plug in a set of headphones, and you're on your way to drum bliss. I guarantee you'll never resort to using earplugs again. Just be careful not to overdo the headphone volume, which can be more damaging to your ears than the volume level inside the drum booth was. What you want to gain is isolation and control, not more acoustic onslaught into your ears."

SHOP TALK

Building A Creative Environment

A Perfect Practice Space Makes For Perfect Practice

Playing Live To Video

My band has been kicking around the idea of using video with our live performance. I know we have to create a click track, but I've never used one before. I have no idea where to even start this project. Any ideas? **Matt**

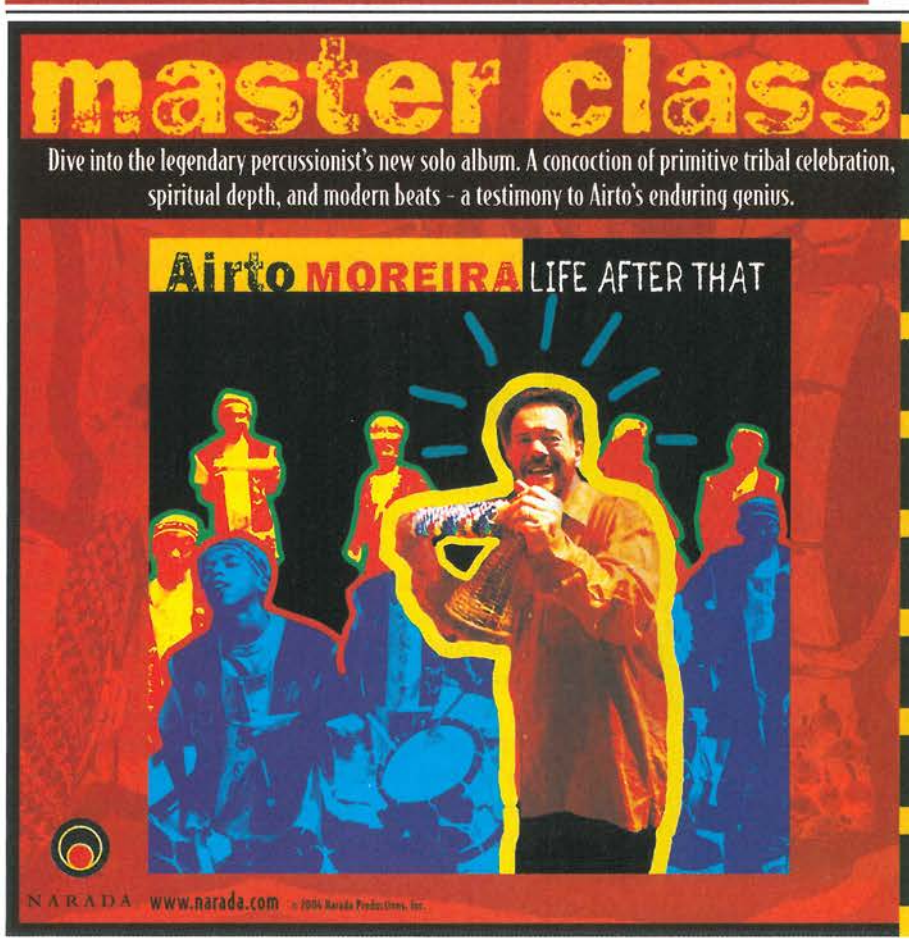
We passed this inquiry to our audio/video and recording expert, Mark Parsons. Mark responds, "There are several ways that you can incorporate video into your live act. Which method you choose will, in part, determine your sync-up requirements.

"I'm assuming that the video will contain pre-recorded footage of your band playing, or other images that need to be in direct sync with your live performance. If this is *not* the case and the video is footage of anything else—your band goofing around (remember The Monkees?), interesting scenery, penguins wrestling in mud, or whatever—then you should experiment with simply playing 'wild' (that is, without beat-for-beat sync) along with the video. I did a film soundtrack that way. We played while watching the footage for basic cues, but otherwise we were free to let the music breathe naturally. It worked well.

"For video that absolutely *must* be in sync, the easiest way is to record a click track onto the audio portion of the video, then feed that audio into your headphones or in-ear monitors. This can be as simple and low-tech as making a dub of the original video onto a VHS tape and adding the required click to the audio track as you make the copy. Or you can use a studio full of pro digital video gear. Either way, be sure to add a couple bars of vocal 'count-in' so you know when to start playing.

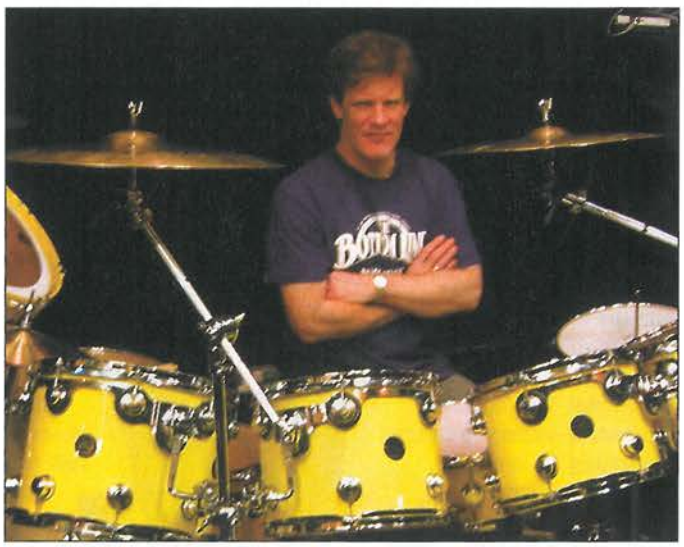
"I suggest that you start with the low-tech/low-budget method I described above. If that works for you, you can seek professional assistance in equipping yourself to pursue it more seriously if you desire. Talk to the folks at your local TV station for starters, unless you have a local studio that does sound for film. In that case, buy an hour or two of their time and get yourself educated. Good luck!"

Readers with questions for this department may submit them to It's Questionable, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, or via email to rvh@moderndrummer.com. Please include your full name with your question.



Groove And Expression With Gary Husband

Q First of all I want to compliment you on your playing. It's really in the pocket! I was wondering if you could transcribe or explain a rhythm that you play on your *Interplay And Improvisation On The Drums* video. First you play a straight, simple rock groove. Then you do a tom fill that leads into an incredible two-bar groove with lots of ghost notes on the snare. You play open-handed ride on your left China, and the last bar of the groove ends with another tom fill. It's a bit hard for me to get, as I have no experience with open-handed playing. **Christian** (from Norway)



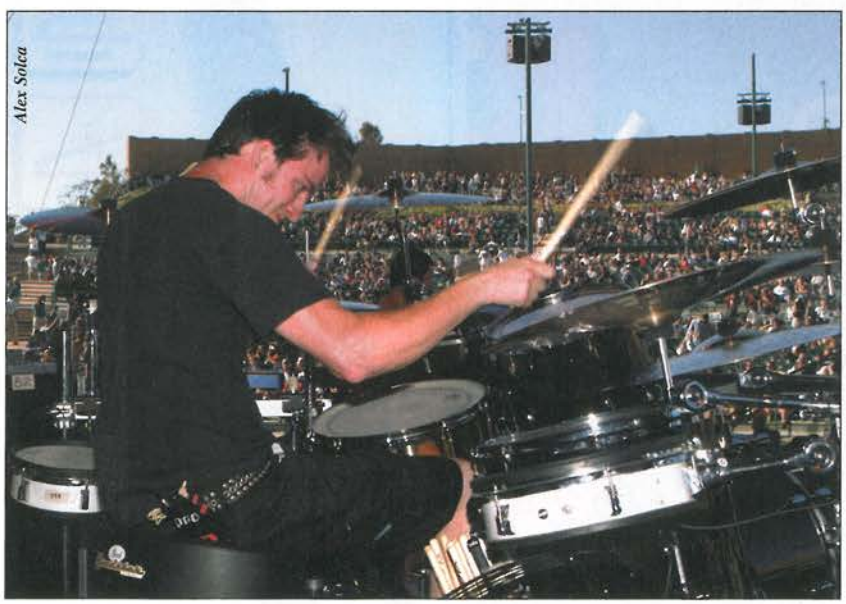
A Thanks very much for your inquiry. I'm afraid it's a little hard for me to recognize the precise passage you're referring to from your description. In addition, just about everything in that video is improvised anyway. The way I see it, it's all pretty much about playing in different musical areas while keeping the ideas going. I place great value on the improvisational nature of what I try to get across. So, unfortunately, I'd most likely have to sit and play the thing over and over in order to come up with a transcription for you.

What I *can* say about the video is that the whole emphasis is on expression. Within that emphasis, a criteria for me is also to try to abandon "licks" and patterns that are familiar, in favor of just playing from the unknown, right in the moment. The open-handed riding is something I continue to explore, as it's a pretty liberating pursuit.

In the pocket? Wow, thanks. I try hard with that, and I do feel that I've gotten better with it in recent years. To summarize, though, I believe that whatever style I have has come about through playing a lot of different kinds of music, which I believe brings about a broader approach. I've certainly played a lot of jazz, and I guess that's what you are hearing bubbling up amongst those beats. Imagination is pretty much the key word for me.

Chevelle's Sam Loeffler
On Developing Double Pedal Skills

Q I recently got Chevelle's *Wonder What's Next*. I was impressed by the overall sound of the music, as well as by your use of the double pedal. I'm just beginning to work with a double pedal. How did you first learn to play yours? Can you recommend any exercises to build up my speed and technique? **Ben H**



A Some of the first things I played on a double pedal were straight backbeats. I was also playing a lot of hi-hat "barks" with my left foot, which can help you to be ready for a double pedal, too. I play paradiddles with my feet as a warm-up before gigs and as a practice routine. It's also good to make sure you're playing on the ball of your foot. That's the fastest way to play, as far as I'm concerned. The sooner you start, the sooner you'll gain speed.

For practice purposes, pick a song that's simple and not too fast. That will help you figure out what foot to start and end on. When I started, I had a tendency to overplay parts. Keep things simple, and your development will go a lot further.

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Gregg Bissonette's Latin Licks

Q I recently saw you perform at a clinic in Nottingham, England, and I must say that you were amazing. I also have both of your videos. You've been a huge inspiration to me, and it was great see you play. During your solo at the clinic, you played some intricate stuff with cowbells, a Jam Block, and your drums. It was like putting Latin licks into a rock solo form. Did you learn that kind of playing from a teacher, or did you just "play around" on a cowbell and try to incorporate it into a solo? Also, what sources can you recommend to help me learn that sort of playing?

Lewis Hill

Alex Solca

A Thanks for coming to my clinic in Nottingham. I kept looking around for Robin Hood, but I never saw him. I was able to tour Sherwood Forest and Nottingham Castle, though. What a blast!

The Afro-Cuban grooves you're referring to (played with LP's Jam Block, Gajate pedal, and various Salsa bells) were all shown to me by one of my favorite drummers, Jimmy Branly. Jimmy is originally from Cuba but now lives in Los Angeles, where I also live. I've taken many lessons from Jimmy, and I intend to take many more. I know that Nottingham is a long way from LA, but if you ever come for a visit, you must get together for a lesson with Jimmy.

Thanks for getting my drum videos. Some others that focus on Afro-Cuban styles include videos by Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez, Ignacio Berroa, Luis Conte, and Changuito. Also, Chuck Silverman did a great documentary video called *The Drumset Artists Of Cuba*. That video is where I first saw and heard Jimmy Branly. At that time he was playing in an amazing Cuban band called NG La Banda. Unbelievable!

Repeat Bar
A Classic Quote From MD's Past

"I tell drummers not to limit themselves by listening only to other drummers for inspiration. You can learn a lot about rhythm by listening to a bass player—or to the wind. You should be open to anything that will inspire you to do something different on your drums."

System Of A Down's **John Dolmayan**, September 2001

Would you like to ask your favorite drummer a question?

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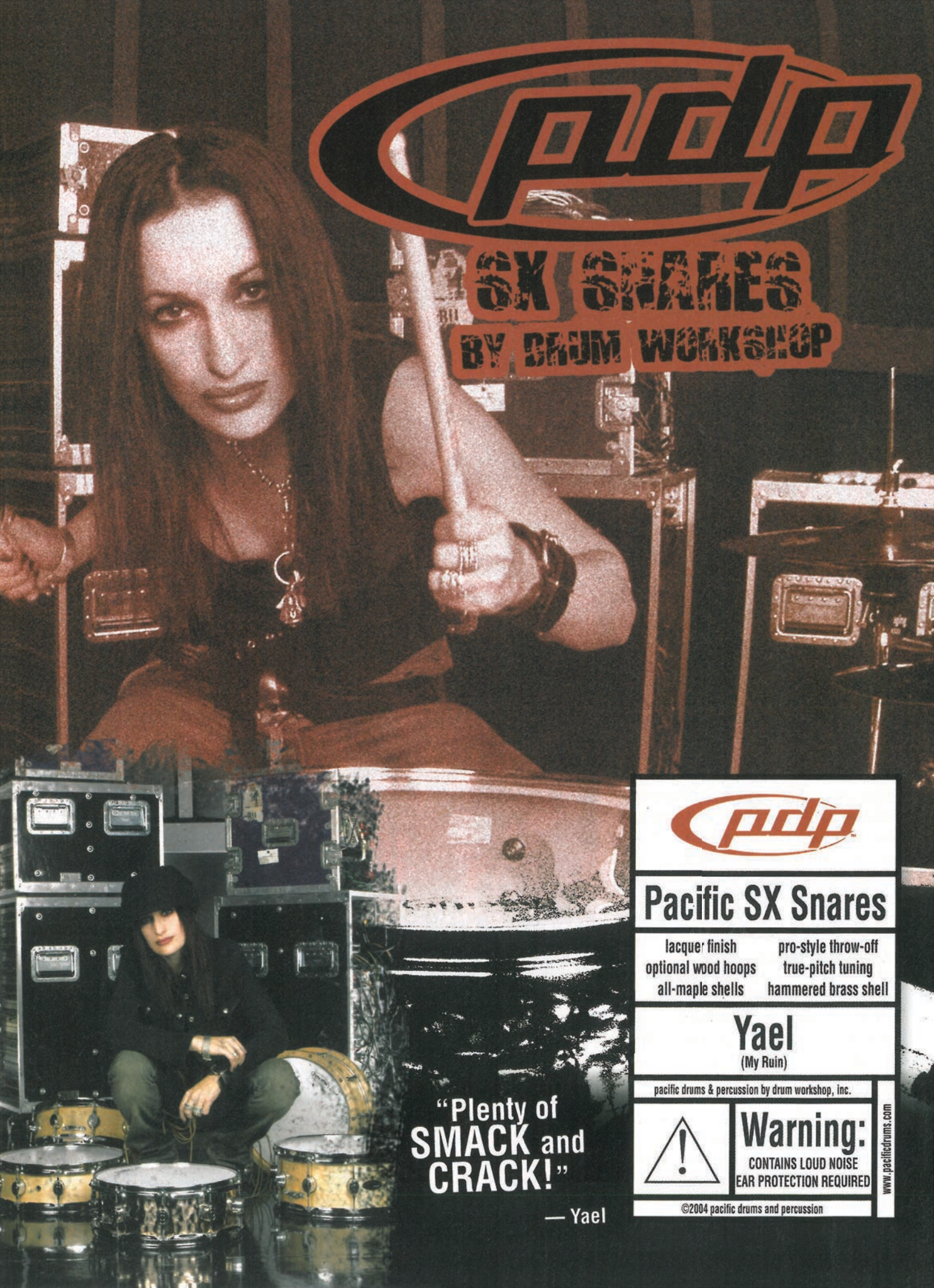
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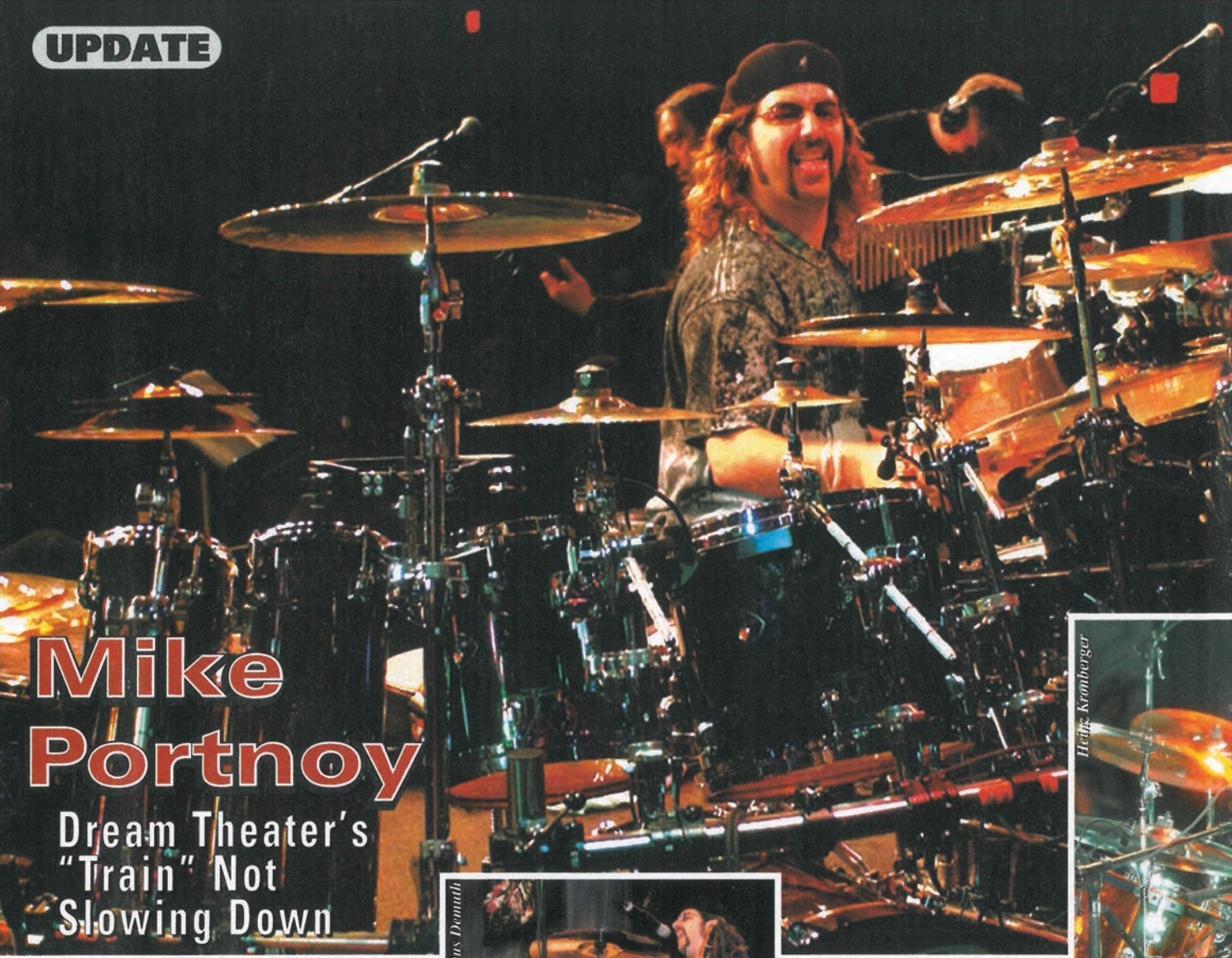
Mike Portnoy

Dream Theater's "Train" Not Slowing Down



Heinz Kromberger

Marcus Demuth

Apparently Mike Portnoy's fast lane is comparable to riding the bullet train. As the highly acclaimed drummer reaches midlife, there seems to be no crisis in sight. Dream Theater's latest prog-metal release, *Train Of Thought,* finds Portnoy and friends playing with a focused urgency, maturity, and forcefulness, with no signs of aging.

"This was the record we felt we needed to make at this point in our career," Portnoy says. "When the members of all my favorite prog acts reached their forties, their music seemed to soften up. I vowed that would never happen to Dream Theater. This seemed like the right time to make that musical statement, since we're approaching our forties."

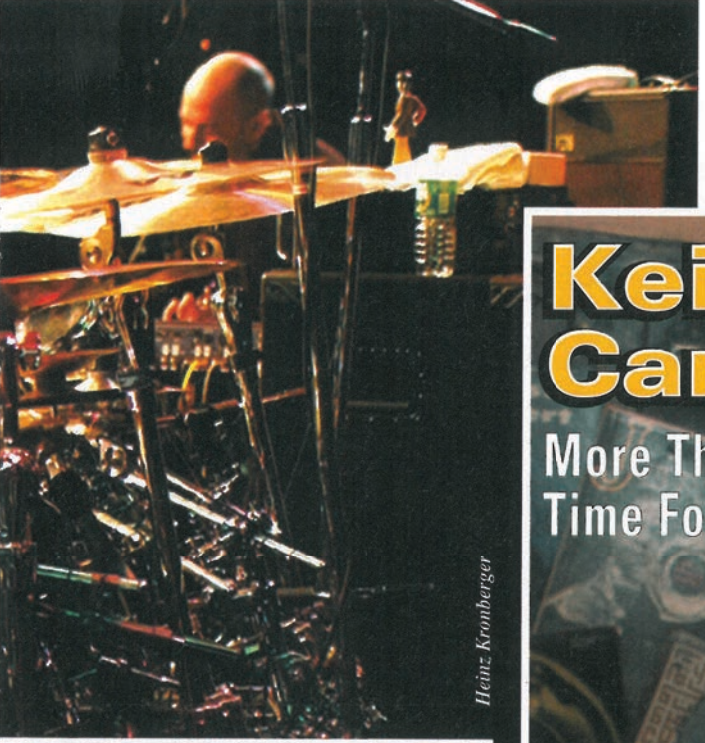
Portnoy's endless stream of projects has strengthened his groove and given him the confidence to play with commanding chops on the new DT release. "I haven't been practicing," Mike admits, "but 2003 was an extremely busy year for me. I played on several other projects during DT downtime. Touring with Neal Morse and recording his *Testimony* CD was very enjoyable, because I could just focus on the drums and not worry about anything else. Plus performing with Neal was one the most emotional experiences I've ever had on stage. I was brought to tears at one point during the tour, which has never happened to me before. The other '03 projects involved simpler drumming, so when it came time to record the new DT record, I was ready to bring all the chops and aggression back to the forefront."

Portnoy used several different drumkits in 2003. "The Siamese Monster was used solely for Dream Theater," he says. "The Neal Morse kit was the same one I used with Transatlantic—a single kick with a double pedal, three rack toms, two floors, and a lot of cymbals. On the OSI recording and G3 tour, I used the right side of my Siamese Monster—a 20" kick, 12" snare, toms, and a gong drum. On the Yellow Matter Custard [Beatles tribute band] and Hammer Of The Gods [Led Zeppelin tribute band] gigs, I had Ringo Starr and John Bonham replica kits made for me by Tama.

"Playing the replica kits was challenging," Portnoy continues. "It was the first time in almost twenty years that I used one bass drum and a single pedal, which really forced me out of my playing style. And the Bonham 26" drum felt especially weird, because I've been downsizing bass drums over the years. That large drum slowed me down a bit, which was perfect, because Bonham used to lay back anyway. That said, I really enjoyed both projects. I think most every drummer has wanted to be Ringo or Bonham for a day."

Discussing the longevity of Dream Theater's successful eighteen-year career, Portnoy proudly proclaims, "We were around way before Guns N' Roses and Nirvana, and we're still going strong way after them."

Mike Haid

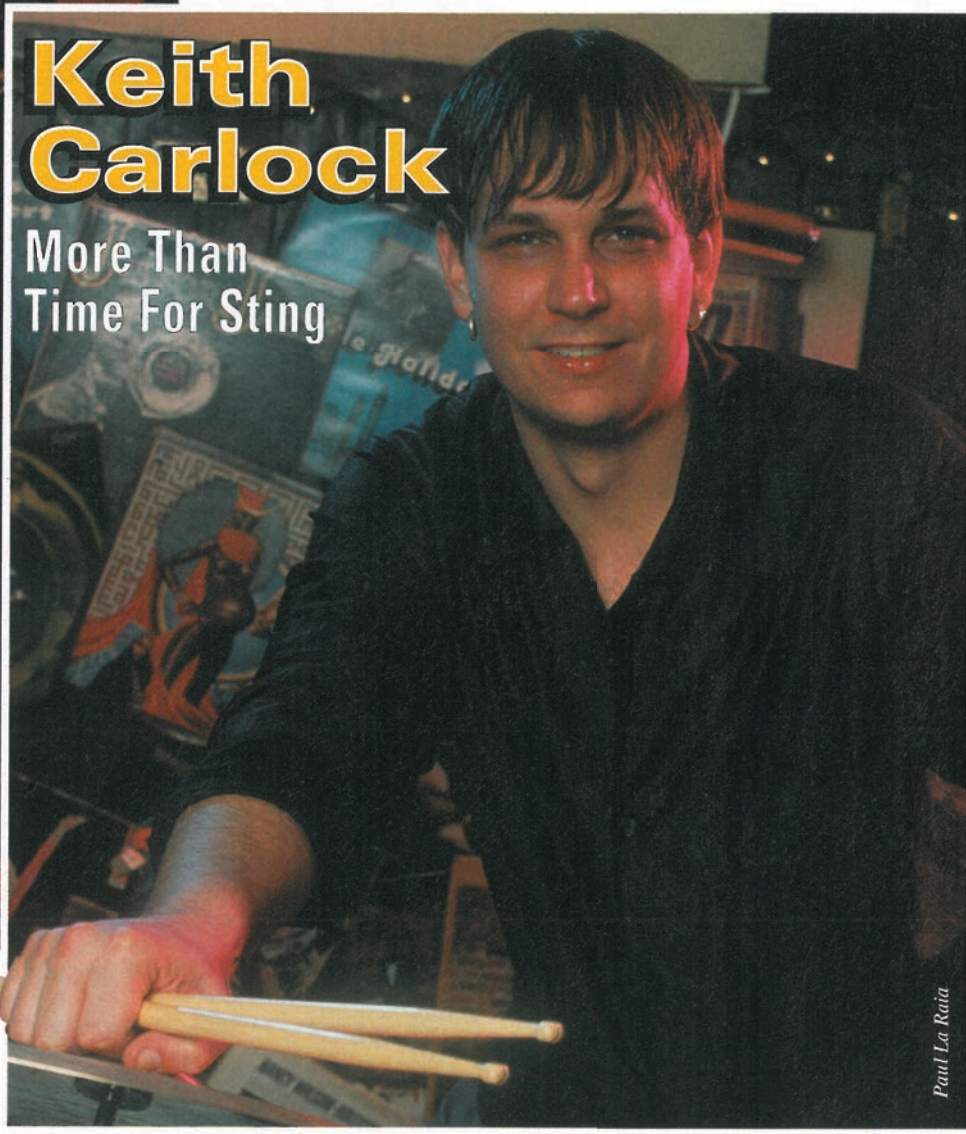


Heinz Kronberger

Perfect replicas: Portnoy on Ringo (left) and Bonham (above) kits

Keith Carlock

More Than Time For Sting



Paul La Raia

Making his Big Apple splash working with The Blues Brothers and Wayne Krantz, Mississippi-born Keith Carlock went on to record and tour with Steely Dan. A tremendous groove player who can also flatten your ears with his dazzling all-over-the-kit prowess, earlier this year Carlock entered the rarified league of world-class drummers by joining Sting's group for his *Sacred Love* tour.

"It's very flattering and a lot like Steely Dan," Carlock relates. "Sting has worked with some of the best drummers on the planet, and to be a part of that lineage is an honor. It's the same with Steely Dan. Touring with them was like going to drummer's school, because of all the greats who recorded those timeless songs."

So how did Keith get the gig with Sting? "I was basically hired because of recommendations, which was a little awkward," the drummer admits. "That hasn't happened to me before. Normally I have to do a real audition, or an artist who knows my playing will hire me. But Sting basically trusted his people when they recommended me. It's totally unbelievable."

Carlock's approach to his new job reveals his consummate professionalism. "I try to know the songs well and play what's necessary," he says. "But I also try to find places where I can open up and maybe play more interesting parts. That's what I did with Steely Dan, slowly working my way in and finding what they liked. It takes time, just like with any other band."

Ken Micallef

LAKE TROUT'S

Mike Lowry

Jamming On Beats

After nine years of non-stop touring, Baltimore's Lake Trout is regarded as one of the top jam bands in the country. What sets them apart from other bands in the genre is their continually evolving sound, which not only includes straight-up rock and funk, but also electronica, ambient music, and—thanks to the talents of drummer Mike Lowry—breakbeats and manic drum 'n' bass backing. It all comes together on the band's excellent third album, *Another One Lost*.

Although Mike cites Tower Of Power's David Garibaldi as his biggest early drumming influence, it's actually deejay and producer DJ Shadow (a.k.a. Josh Davis) who's had the biggest impact on his current playing style. "DJ Shadow's record *Endtroducing...* changed my life," Mike says. "The drums on that album are so musical. It's all about intensity through repetition, not just through getting busier. When you strip something down and play it over and over again, over a long period of time the *slightest* subtlety takes it up a notch, so you don't have to overplay. For the music we're doing, there aren't lots of crazy time-signature changes to keep up with, so that approach works. I think of my own playing within Trout as almost a continuous sample."

The design of Mike's kit, which includes three different snare drums, is the result of his fondness for playing beats. "I have a Maryland Drum Source custom 5x13 snare, plus a Legend 10x10 snare, and an old, knock-off Slingerland 14" snare off to the side," he explains. "That third snare has a Remo FiberSkyn head that I just leave on until the first layer breaks through, so the sound is super wet and deep—like a drumbeat slowed down on tape. I'm constantly moving between all three snares. We do side gigs sometimes where I'll only use the snare drums, a bass drum, and a hi-hat." Again, Garibaldi's influence has something to do with that choice. "I once went to one of David's clinics where he was like, 'If you can't rock with just a hi-hat, snare, and bass drum, then you can't rock.' That became my foundation."

Gail Worley

NEWS

Ali Jackson is on the recent Wynton Marsalis disc, *The Magic Hour*.

Gustavo Meli was recently chosen as drummer of the year for 2003 by the Argentinian Drummers Club. (Meli also won the award in 2001.) For more info, check out www.clubdebateristas.net.

Joe Franco is working on a new project with Kansas vocalist/keyboardist Steve Walsh.

Rich Redmond is on the debut disc by hot Nashville act Rushlow, *Right Now*. The band recently performed at the Grand Ole Opry and has just returned from a European tour. (For more on Rich, go to his Web site at www.richredmond.com.)

Rob The Drummer recently completed a twenty-show tour for Pfizer Global. Read more about Rob's positive message and latest activities at www.rob-the-drummer.com.

Percussion great **Frank Colon** (Manhattan Transfer) has a new solo album out called *Latin Wonder*. He's also been touring and recording with Gato Barbieri, Michael Wolff, and Aretha Franklin.

Richard Procter is on the self-titled disc by the group Tishamingo, whose music has been described as "free-wheeling classic rock filtered through a southern-boogie vibe."

For the third consecutive year, **Tom Bona** has received Canada's Maple Blues Award for drummer of the year.

Kevin Rapillo is currently touring with Rodney Atkins. Kevin spent last year touring with Grammy-nominated drummer/producer/songwriter Tom Hambridge.

Prong is back with a new CD, *Scorpio Rising*, with **Dan Laudo** on drums.

Brian Tichy has been in the studio working on Billy Idol's upcoming CD. Brian's also been recording with Kenny Wayne Shepherd and Japanese guitarist Tak Matsumoto. In between all of that, he and keyboardist Derek Sherinian have formed a band and are working on a new CD.

Sebastian DeKrom is on Jamie Cullum's debut album, *Twentysomething*.

Bish is on Oh My God's latest, *Interrogations And Confessions*.

Chicago jazz drummer **Ted Sirota** and his group Rebel Souls have a new disc out on Delmark, *Breeding Resistance*.

Drummer/vocalist **Popsy Dixon** is on *Simple Truths* by The Holmes Brothers.

Lewis Nash and **Don Alias** are on Cheryl Bentyne's *Talk Of The Town*.

Ricky Sebastian (Harry Belafonte, Los Hombres Calientes) has a new method book with accompanying CD called *The Independent Drummer*. For more info, visit www.strdigital.com.

Ryan MacMillan is on The Push Stars' *Paint The Town*.

Laurie Jenkins is on tour with Howie Day.

Avi Agababa plays percussion and drums on Chava Alberstein's *End Of The Holiday*.

Brian Geiger is on Crossfade's self-titled debut LP.

Martin Lopez is on Opeth's new DVD, *Lamentations—Live At Shepherd's Bush Empire 2003*.

Tobias Ralph is on *Demonophonic Blues* by Tony C. & The Truth.

Congratulations to drummer/author **Colin Bailey**. His classic method book, *Bass Drum Control*, is celebrating its fortieth anniversary this year.

Ringo Starr and **Sheila E** are together again on Ringo's new live All-Starr CD, *Tour 2003*. The lineup also includes Colin Hay, John Waite, Paul Carrack, and Mark Rivera. Speaking of Ringo, *The Beatles: The First US Visit* has been released on DVD. It features live performances and rare footage. For more on Ringo, go to his Web site at www.ringostarr.com.

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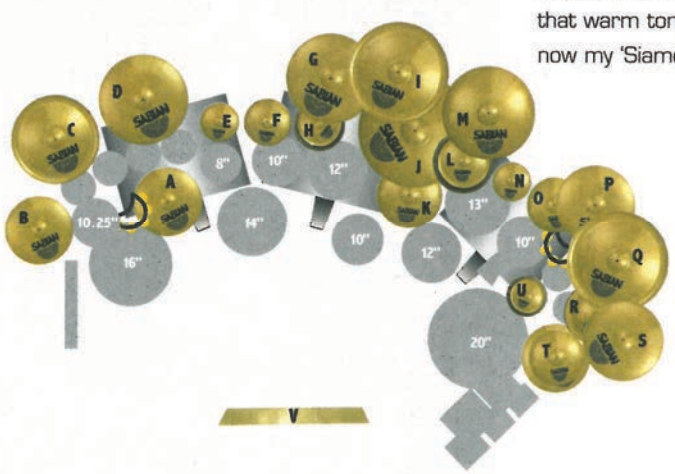
- MIKE PORTNOY - Dream Theater



MIKE PORTNOY - Dream Theater > SET-UP

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F) 9" Signature Max Splash
G) 18" AA Medium Thin Crash
H) Signature Max Stax (Mid)
I) 20" HHX Chinese
J) 22" Hand Hammered Rock Ride
K) 13" HHX Groove Hats
L) Signature Max Stax (Low)
M) 19" Signature Fierce Crash
N) 7" Signature Max Splash
O) 11" Signature Max Splash
P) 17" Hand Hammered Thin Crash
Q) 20" Hand Hammered Chinese
R) 12" Ice Bell over Signature Max Stax (High)
S) 16" HHXtreme Crash
T) Triple Hi-Hat
U) 8" Hi-Hats (2 Signature Max Stax Bottoms)
V) 28" Zodiac Gong

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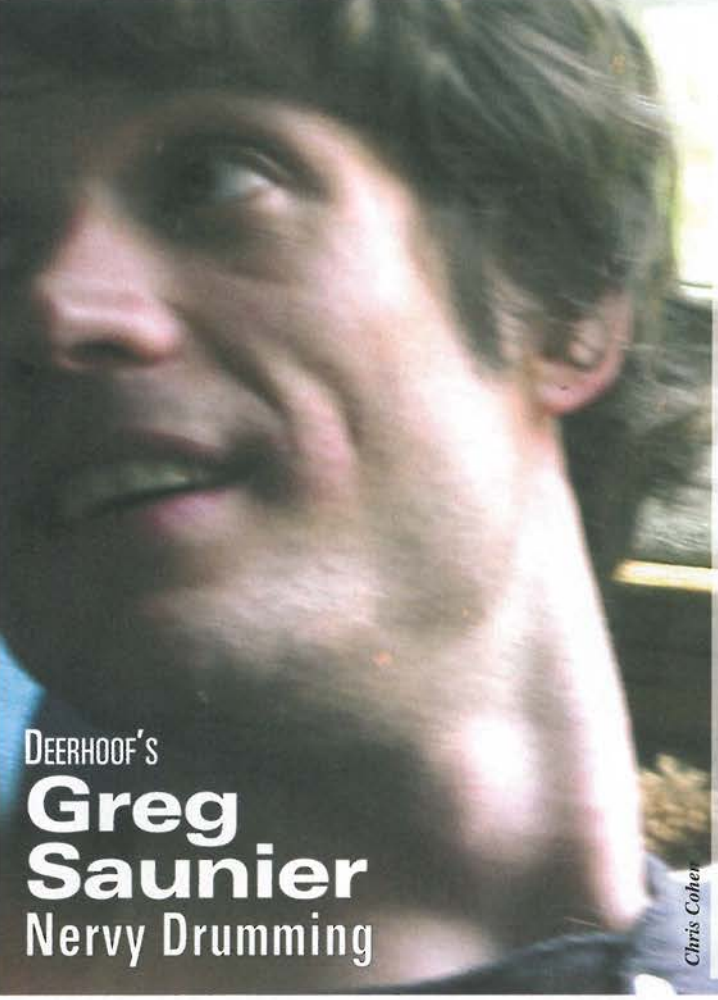


Deerhoof's **Greg Saunier**
Nervy Drumming

Chris Cohen

"If I have any strength as a drummer, it's playing songs. It isn't really making cool sounds, and it isn't improvising."

Greg Saunier is being modest, and the proof is in the pudding. Besides manning the drums in San Francisco's Deerhoof, Saunier is one half of Nervous Cop, which he shares responsibility for with monster Hella drummer Zach Hill. The duo's self-titled disc on 5RC is one of the most extreme drum-oriented albums you'll likely hear, a maelstrom of kit explosions, later manipulated on-screen with all manner of dramatic coloring. The result is some pretty wild stuff.

"If you've heard his band Hella," suggests Saunier, "you know what a great drummer Zach is. He had an idea for a band where we would play together, called Nervous Cop. We improvised, and I just tried to hold that image in my mind while we were playing. Later I took the tape of our performance and worked with it on the computer. The album ended up taking a year and a half to complete.

"It was like a big doodle," Greg goes on. "When I doodle, I take whatever's there and exaggerate an aspect—make this thick part thicker, or this messy part messier."

Intriguingly, Saunier's tools were relatively basic: an iMac and the free downloadable version of ProTools. "In Deerhoof, mostly everything is composed. Even if we end up processing it in a certain way, it's not the same as music that seems to be more *about* sounds. The Nervous Cop album was probably the first time that sound was the top priority."

Readers interested in Saunier's less nervous, more composed side should check out Deerhoof's latest, *Milk Man*. A surprising mix of classic prog-rock arrangement ideas, pixie-pop vocals, and Deep Purply rhythmic choices, Deerhoof is an ideal vehicle for Greg's deep pocket and thoughtful drum parts. To catch Deerhoof live, or for more information on Nervous Cop and Hella, go to www.killrockstars.com.

Adam Budofsky

The Bangles' **Debbi Peterson**
Doll Revolution

Debbi Peterson's solid backbeat propelled The Bangles to the summit of the '80s pop charts with five top-10 singles and double-platinum album sales. Then, at the height of their success, the band succumbed to internal friction. The personal conflicts ultimately led to their break-up in 1989.

Now, after a decade of healing, The Bangles are back with *Doll Revolution*, their first new album in fifteen years. This time around, the band bypassed the traditional yet impersonal studio atmosphere. Instead, they set up shop in a rented ranch house dubbed "Stately Bangle Manor," nestled deep in Beverly Hills.

"That recording session was liberating, fun, and joyous," Peterson says. "We all felt relaxed. We were at a house, not a studio, so there was less pressure." This liberation gave Debbi the freedom to diversify her sound. "I alternated between a really deep metal snare drum and a couple of wood ones. Brad Wood, our co-producer, is a drummer too. He had a couple of amazing snares, so it was fun to experiment during recording."

According to Debbi, experimentation was not limited to the drums. "Brad had a large assortment of fun percussion instruments: sandpaper blocks, jingle bells, Indian cymbals—you name it. On 'Stealing Rosemary,' we all did our kindergarten music session. We each took a percussion instrument, and off we went!"

When touring, Debbi is usually seated behind her black Gretsch set, but is never without her favorite natural-finish, maple-shelled snare drum. "I always take that one with me," she says. "I really like the sound of a wood-shelled drum versus a metal one. I also take my Zildjian cymbals and my throne, which is set at a certain height since I sit a little higher than most drummers."

Debbi spends more time up front with the other three Bangles these days, strumming her acoustic guitar and interacting with the crowd. "It's very different up there, since you're so much closer to the audience. You get more feedback, obviously, and I enjoy it. But I still love the thrill of drumming. I guess I'm lucky, I get the best of both worlds."

Kraig Sollenberger

Kraig Sollenberger

DRUM DATES

This month's important events in drumming history

Gone but not forgotten: **Chick Webb** passed away in June of 1939, **Yogi Horton** on 6/8/87, **Tito Puente** on 6/1/00, and **Richard "Pistol" Allen** on 6/31/02.

With their debut album *Truth* climbing the charts, The Jeff Beck Group (with Ron Wood, Rod Stewart, and **Aynsley Dunbar**) makes their US live debut on 6/14/68.

Denny Seiwell (Paul McCartney & Wings) records the title track to the James Bond movie *Live And Let Die*, which opens on 6/1/73. On the following day, Wings have the number-1 single on the charts with the song "My Love," from the album *Red Rose Speedway*.

On 6/15/81, The Police (with **Stewart Copeland** on drums) begin recording their fourth album, *Ghost In The Machine*, at AIR studios in Montserrat with co-producer Hugh Padgham.

On 6/22/90, Billy Joel (with **Liberty DeVitto** on drums) becomes the first rock artist to play Yankee Stadium.

Happy Birthday!

Remo Belli
(Remo drumheads): 6/22/27

Vic Firth
(timpani master): 6/2/30

James Gadson
(R&B great): 6/17/39

Charlie Watts
(Rolling Stones): 6/2/41

Bernard Purdie
(R&B legend): 6/11/41

Mick Fleetwood
(Fleetwood Mac): 6/24/42

Ian Paice
(Deep Purple): 6/29/48

Frank Beard
(ZZ Top): 6/11/49

Joey Kramer
(Aerosmith): 6/21/50

Bun E. Carlos
(Cheap Trick): 6/12/51

Peter Erskine
(jazz giant): 6/5/54

Doane Perry
(Jethro Tull): 6/16/54

Charles Collins
(R&B great): 6/21/54

Mickey Curry
(Bryan Adams): 6/10/56

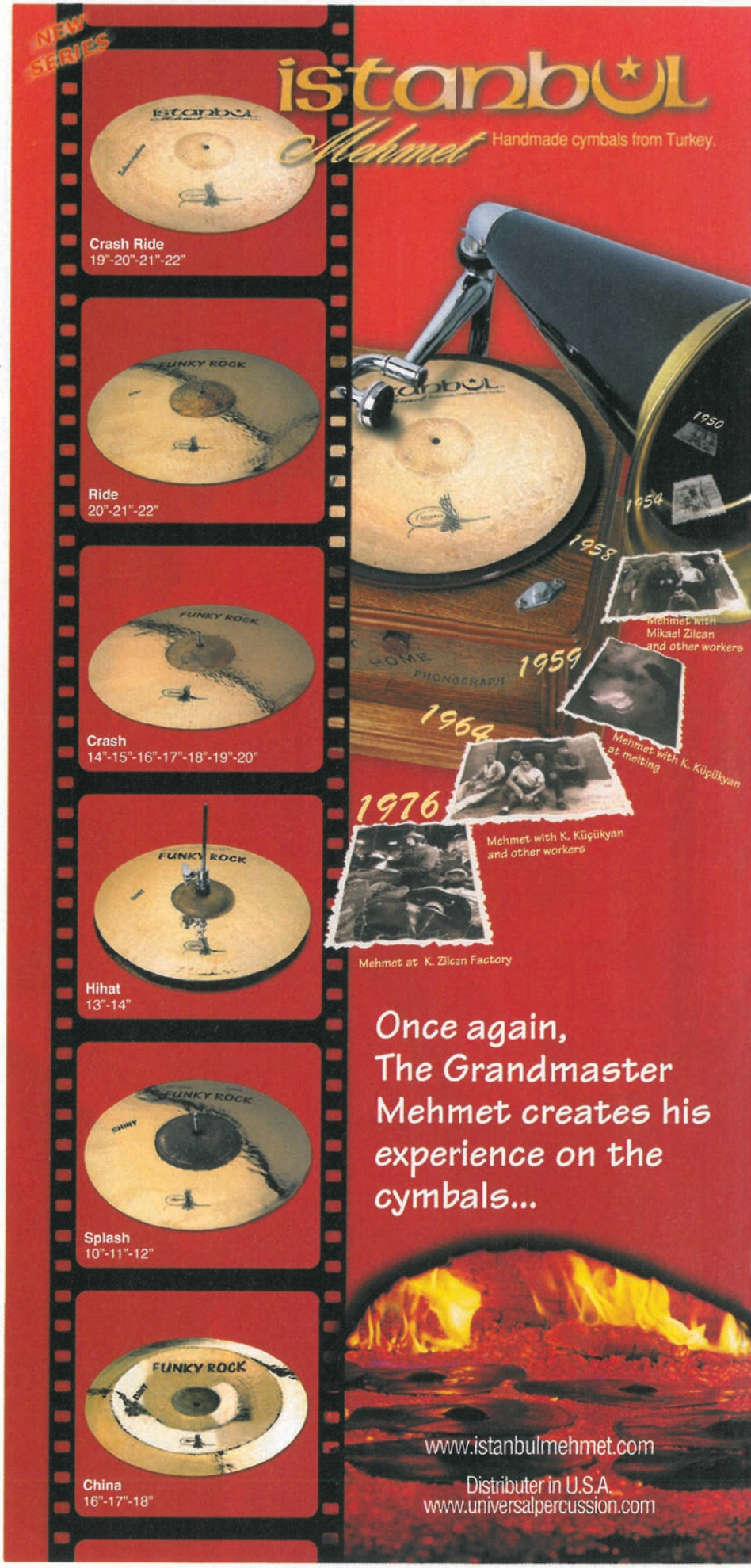
Chad Cromwell
(sessions): 6/14/57

Zoro
(Lenny Kravitz):
6/13/62

Steve Shelley
(Sonic Youth): 6/23/62

Jimmy Chamberlin
(Smashing Pumpkins):
6/10/64

Eric Kretz
(Stone Temple Pilots):
6/7/66



TAMA®

STEFANIE EULINBERG

THE POWER BEHIND KID ROCK

HOLDS FORTH ON BIG VS. SMALL AND MAPLE VS. BIRCH

Talk about change! Stefanie's memorable mammoth maple kit with its twin kicks and signature American flag graphic no longer graces the Kid Rock drum riser. In its place, sits a smaller birch kit with a single bass. What happened?

"The music changed is what happened," explains Eulinberg. "In the beginning, Kid Rock's music was mostly heavy, and a big kit was a huge part of the show. Now we've chilled out and the music styles change constantly." Did she miss the big kit? "Immediately! It looked so cool having this little chick behind this big kit, going for it. But it was ridiculous, too. I'm only about five feet tall, and sometimes all you could see was my forehead! And with the double kicks, I never could get comfortable with the hi-hat, no matter how I angled it. With the smaller kit and single kick, I'm a lot more comfortable—and that makes it easier to groove. I love the sound of big drums, but I'm not sure all that resonance is necessary. In the large venues, our sound guy is going to get a fat tone no matter what the drum sizes. However, I've still got a big 18 x 22 kick. Man, that's a great %$#@$ drum!"

However, a bigger change may be one that's less visible. "When we switched from maple to birch, it was like night and day. I got compliments from everyone. My guitarist, Jason Cross, said, 'Those are the best sounding drums you've ever had.' And he and I have been through quite a few maple sets, even before I signed up with Tama. Maple may be a little too subtle for Kid Rock, where most of what I do is about time. I can see using maple in more chilled situations like playing with Melissa Etheridge where I want to slide into a groove without being over-aggressive. Maple has a tendency to ring just a little bit longer, and it's a little more sensitive than birch. Birch isn't as giving. You have to work to get that sound—but once you get it, it's dialed in and you're good. Birch gives me the right amount of punch and the drums themselves resonate just perfectly."

Starclassic Performer Birch EFX in White Silk

- 18 x 22 Bass Drum
- 8 x 10 Tom Tom
- 9 x 12 Tom Tom
- 11 x 14 Tom Tom
- 14 x 16 Tom Tom
- 5 1/2 x 14 Performer Snare

Hardware

- HH905 Lever-Glide Hi-Hat
- HP900PTW Iron Cobra Double Pedal (not shown)
- HS700W Hi Hat Stand
- HTW79W Double Tom Stand
- HC73BW Boom Stand
- HT730 Ergo-Rider Throne

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Sabian Paragon Cymbals

Tailored For The Tastes Of Neil Peart

HITS

complementary sizes and well-matched sounds for medium- to high-volume playing

visually magnificent, elegant look

by Mike Haid

Drumming legend Neil Peart has always been known for his dedication to innovation and his eternal quest for perfection. So it's not surprising that when Neil decided to join forces with Sabian to develop a new line of signature cymbals, the outcome would be nothing short of spectacular. But the quest for that outcome wasn't easy. According to Sabian cymbal specialist Mark Love, "Neil was very definite about what he was seeking. He wanted subtle-looking cymbals with explosive sounds that would be focused, cutting, and musical."

Paragon cymbals are made using a combination of manufacturing steps taken from several existing Sabian lines. They start with pure Sabian B20 bronze, and after being hammered they receive AA-style lathing on their bottoms and AAX-style lathing on their tops. Their bells are made in the Hand Hammered style. In a final distinctive cosmetic touch, the natural-finish cymbals are given a distinguished logo in "rich gold" ink.

The Paragon series offers a balanced lineup of sounds, including 8" and 10" splashes, 16", 18", and 20" crashes, 19" and 20" Chinas, 13" and 14" hi-hats, and a 22" ride. Let's take a closer look at this precious metal from the Great White North.

Ride

According to Sabian, they began development of the Paragon line with the ride cymbal—and that development went through quite a few steps. Sabian's promotional literature quotes Neil as saying, "At first Mark Love had [the cymbal's] bow lathed, and left the bell raw. Interesting, but a bit 'clangy.' So he had it given the hand-hammering treatment. Better, but still lacking in nuance. Next we tried a combination of lathing and hand hammering on the bell, and *presto.* That was what I wanted: a sharp, musical sound with a range of complex overtones."

I have to concur with Neil's assessment. The 22" ride offers a versatile tone that allows for excellent stick articulation, with minimal unwanted overtones. Given the cymbal's size and its extra-heavy weight (over 8 lbs.), I was surprised at how direct the response was when I really layed into it. The overall sound is defined, clean, and not too heavy. The bell is bright and full-bodied, due to its Hand Hammered design. This ride's warm yet cutting tone could allow it to be used in many different musical situations.

Hi-Hats

The 13" and 14" hi-hats provided clean, crisp stick articulation. The overall sound was thick, warm, and when the hats were played with force, not overbearingly piercing. Both sets of hats have smooth AA qualities mixed with the darker HHX sound. The 13" hats had a slightly higher-pitched tone than the 14" models. Both sizes produced a well-defined "chick" with the foot.

Crashes

The 16", 18", and 20" crashes are full-bodied and seem best suited for loud playing situations. Sabian's literature states that the AAX "pinpoint" lathing on the tops of the cymbals "makes for a fast, lively response," while the traditional, wider AA-style lathing on the bottoms and the hand-hammered bell help to provide "a full, rich tone." According to Neil, "This combination proved to be exactly what I had been looking for in a crash cymbal: a unity of rapid attack and swell around a solid, musical sound with a smooth decay."

High praise, indeed—but merited. All three crashes that we tested opened up quickly when struck at medium volume, but were most effective—and really spread—when struck with force. Under those circumstances they generated a brilliant tone with a beautiful sustaining decay. The three sizes are well matched in tonality, with a nice pitch variation between each.

Splashes And Chinas

My favorite cymbals in the Paragon line may be the effects models. The 8" and 10" splashes, for example, are very expressive, warm, and well matched in tonality. Either of them could be used in any musical context. Both are very responsive at low volume, and they explode when played with force.

Considering that Neil Peart has played authentic Chinese-made China cymbals for many years, it's not surprising (although it is impressive) that the 20" Paragon China has a very traditional China sound, with a direct, dry tone and a piercing attack. It has a much smaller lip than that of the 19" China, which gives the 20" more articulation and less sustain. The 19" China, on the other hand, is a trashy, dark cymbal with a very wide lip. The large hammered edges spread the sound with a warm, quick attack and a sweet, sustaining decay. These two cymbals complement each other well, offering a wide spectrum of aggressive sounds.

Overall

Whether or not you're a Neil Peart fan, I don't think you could ask for a better blend of cymbal sounds and sizes for medium to loud drumming situations than Sabian's Paragon line. The crashes and Chinas seem best suited for loud playing, while the remainder of the line would work well across the board. The pricing falls in line with that of other professional cymbals offering the same quality of construction and materials.

It seems apparent that Neil Peart has created yet another rock masterpiece—with help from Sabian's master cymbalmakers.

THE NUMBERS

8" Splash	$ 126
10" Splash	$ 149
13" Hi-Hats	$ 367
14" Hi-Hats	$ 404
16" Crash	$ 244
18" Crash	$ 287
20" Crash	$ 337
19" China	$ 306
20" China	$ 337
22" Ride	$ 398
Performance Set	$ 995
(includes 14" hats, 16" crash, 22" ride, and cymbal bag or hardshell case)	
Effects Pack	$ 551
(includes 8" and 10" splashes and 19" China)	
Complete Paragon Setup	$3,199
(includes heavy-duty road case)	

(506) 272-2019, www.sabian.com.

Magstar Custom Snare Drums

Keeping The Customers Satisfied

HITS

attention to acoustic details

outstanding construction and finish

impressive pricing

by Rick Van Horn

When it comes to the art and science of drum construction, Magstar owner/drum builder Rob Kampa is one of the most knowledgeable and experienced guys I know. He's done a ton of research into how different woods, fittings, and finishes interact to create a drum's sound. He's also gained the practical expertise that can only be achieved by building hundreds of distinctively different drums.

With all his expertise, you'd expect Rob to have some pretty strong opinions on how drums should be made—and he does. That's why I find it all the more admirable that he readily sets those opinions aside when it comes to achieving what each customer wants from his or her drum, acoustically and cosmetically. That, to me, is the mark of a true *custom* drum builder.

Clockwise from top: Magstar Maple, Cherry/Birch, Oak, and Mahogany/Birch with Alien graphics

Each of the drums sent to us for review was created to the order of a specific drummer. (We're grateful for the patience exhibited by these drummers in allowing us to test their drums before they received them.) In order for us to accurately evaluate each drum, Rob sent us the customer's sound objectives, which he used as a guide when constructing that drum. Let's see how well he achieved his customers' goals.

Common Features

Although there's nothing "common" about our review drums, they do share some common features. To begin with, they're all fitted with Attack Terry Bozzio single-ply medium batter heads and snare-side heads. These are excellent, all-purpose heads that lend sensitivity and response to each of the drums.

The drums are also equipped with Trick Percussion's new GS007 snare throw-off. This is a unique design that features a smooth, rotational action rather than a drop-away lever to raise and lower the snares. The unit is machined completely out of aluminum, which provides for very precise operation as well as rugged durability.

Finally, the construction quality and appearance of each drum is absolutely superb. Considering some of the almost gaudy finishes that Rob has done in the past, the natural wood finishes of our review drums seem downright subdued. But each reveals its distinctive wood type to beautiful advantage, giving the drums a visual richness to match their acoustic characters.

7x13 Maple

The shell of this drum features nine plies of maple, with an outer tenth ply of bird's-eye maple finished in a light black stain with a soft-gloss orange shellac to really bring out the wood's unique pattern. Six-ply reinforcement rings are added inside the shell. Fittings include offset chromed-brass tube lugs, chrome die-cast hoops, stainless-steel tension rods, and 20-strand standard snares.

The customer's sound objectives read: "I need a 13" drum to be played hard and heavy, with crisp attack and the ability to withstand 'gorilla-force' rimshots. It should have a focused sound, with meaty projection at medium-high tuning and some 'roundness' to the overall sound when tuned lower."

This is the biggest-sounding 13" drum I've ever heard. I like a 13"-diameter snare drum for the responsiveness and clarity that it usually produces. Combining those features with the depth, resonance, and tonality of a 7"-deep shell achieved the "crisp-yet-meaty" character that the customer was seeking. The reinforcement rings and die-cast hoops helped to create great initial "crack," while the deep shell gave the sound plenty of room to expand in before leaving the drum.

I was also impressed with this drum's wide tuning range. I could crank the top head up to drum-corps tension without the drum sounding choked, and I could drop it down to a comfortable "dig-in" tension for a great fat-back sound. Mission accomplished, I'd say.

5x14 Oak

This all-oak drum features a ten-ply shell with ten-ply reinforcement rings, finished in a clear soft-gloss polyurethane. Fittings include black-chromed brass tube lugs, black chrome 2.3-mm triple-flanged hoops, and 20-strand snares.

The customer's sound objectives read: "I want a drum that's *not* made of maple, and that commands a powerful presence and excellent attack. This drum is to be used in a rock/jazz setting in which it must explode with clear projection but function equally well at mid to low volumes. It also needs to be responsive to being played with brushes."

I've heard a few oak drums recently, so I wasn't surprised by the performance of this snare. But I *was* impressed. "Powerful presence and excellent attack" indeed! The relatively thick shell and reinforcing rings lent themselves to reflectivity and responsiveness. The result was that when hit hard, this drum just fired a *bullet* of focused, penetrating sound. But that same responsiveness allowed it to be sensitive and articulate under moderate-volume playing—including brushwork. It wasn't a *warm* drum, by any means. But it certainly did "explode with clear projection," as per the customer's request.

7x12 Cherry/Birch

This combination-shell drum has inner and outer plies of cherry, with a "core" consisting of four plies of birch and two of poplar. It features a hand-rubbed oil satin finish, black-chromed brass tube lugs and 2.3-mm triple-flanged hoops, and 20-strand snares.

The customer's sound objectives read: "I want a 12" snare that does not typify the sort of drums that function solely as effect or auxiliary snares—with lots of high-end crack but no body underneath. I want it to be usable as a primary snare for lower-intensity gigs."

Rob added his own notes about this drum. They state, "The 7" depth of the shell, along with the warmth and richness of the cherry and poplar combined with the dimensional stability of the birch, should provide the necessary low end. A 60° bearing edge cut on the inner six plies, plus a countercut of 60° on the outer two plies, should create a very focused area

where the head makes contact with the shell. So while the deep shell might eliminate some definition, the sharp apex of the bearing edge and the smaller drum diameter should make up for that loss. Also, the softer wood types can really come alive and 'bark' when higher tensioning is applied."

The acoustic factors that applied to the 7x13 maple drum also applied here, with a few new ones at work. The 12" diameter took the initial pitch of the drum even higher than that of the 13". The 7" shell depth brought in the low tonality and resonance. But in this case the acoustic nature of the poplar and cherry plies added warmth and mellowness that was not present in the harder maple drum. There was plenty of articulation and definition (possibly contributed by the birch plies), along with excellent, full-bodied projection. Such performance would certainly allow this drum to be used as a primary snare.

Additional views of the etched and painted graphics on the Mahogany/Birch drum.

6¾x14 Mahogany/Birch

This drum is unique on several counts. Its combination shell has inner and outer plies of mahogany, with a four-ply birch/two-ply poplar core. The exterior features hand-burned etchings in an alien-encounter motif. The etchings are painted in various acrylic colors, and the entire drum has a final soft-gloss polyurethane finish. Fittings include black-chromed brass tube lugs, black die-cast hoops, and Puresound snares.

The customer's sound objectives were brief, though anything but simple: "My playing environment is mostly heavy rock. I want a fat/warm/dry snare drum that has focused projection, with a finish that features curious alien graphics."

Rob's notes read: "The mahogany/birch/poplar combination of woods should produce a drum with a low fundamental. This, combined with the deep shell and die-cast hoops, should provide a huge presence. Puresound snare wires will give even more focused snare response. Older drumshells contain mahogany and poplar, which is what gives them their dry, warm, vintage sound. Birch is a stable, hard wood that provides great tone. A sharp 45° cut on the inner six plies and a 60° countercut on the outer two plies will allow the head to rest on a very sharp apex. This should provide a longer sustain to balance the somewhat dark overall sound created by the softer woods, die-cast hoops, deep shell, and Puresound snares."

My impressions of this drum attest to the fact that Rob Kampa knows his stuff. His predictions for this beauty were right on the mark. Imagine the warmth and character of a vintage wood snare, combined with the penetration and projection of the best contemporary models. Throw in the resonance, tone, and "fatness" contributed by the deep shell, and you've got an idea of what this drum sounded like when I hit it. About the only thing it *didn't* have was stratospheric high-end cut. But it wasn't designed to, so that's no failing on its part.

With a few exceptions, mahogany is a forgotten wood in drum manufacturing these days—which is surprising, considering how many cherished vintage drums included mahogany in their makeup. Believe me, no one who hears *this* drum is likely to forget it.

Conclusion

Based on the four Magstar drums reviewed here, along with several others I've encountered over the years, I have no reservations whatever in saying that Rob Kampa makes drums that are as good as *anybody's*. They're individually distinctive, beautifully crafted, and a joy to play.

Read the paragraph above over again. Then look at the figures in the Numbers box. Remember folks: These are *custom* drums. 'Nuff said?

THE NUMBERS

7x13 Bird's-Eye Maple	$379
5x14 Oak	$399
7x12 Cherry/Birch	$339
6¾x14 Mahogany/Birch (without graphics)	$399
6¾x14 Mahogany/Birch (with Alien graphics)	$599

(508) 747-3493, www.magstardrums.com.

Quick Looks

Superbeaters

Back in my youth we called them "super balls." My kids call them "bouncy balls." Whatever you call them, they're those high-density rubber balls that go on bouncing forever. Bill Babin of Superbeaters is now topping bass drum beaters with them, and the result is impressive.

Superbeaters come in four diameters: #1 at 38 mm, #2 at 45 mm, #3 at 50 mm, and #4 at 60 mm. Each size has its own character and feel, but they all offer great power and punch. The #1 beaters are small and quick, facilitating fast passages that might have proved difficult before. The #2 and #3 beaters are closer to the general range that most players will find comfortable. The #4 is the size of a small orange, and consequently packs quite a wallop. In terms of playability, the rubber balls literally bounce off the bass drum batter, adding speed to one's playing. They also seem to absorb shock, so they'd probably feel great on an electronic kit.

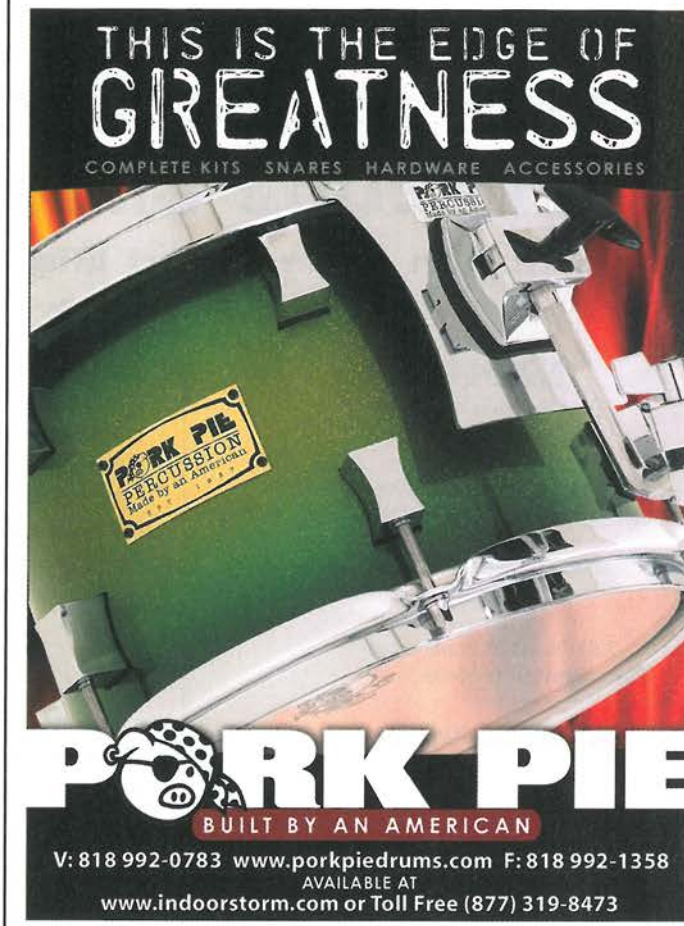
The weight and density of the beaters gave a real sonic boost to whatever bass drum I played. I used one to turn an 18" drum into a 22". It also gave my Headset shell-less bass drum much more projection and low end—and that's saying something. My largest bass drum is a 22", and the sound I got from that drum rebounded throughout the house.

The range of size and weight offered by the beaters also gives you the chance to "weight train" your feet. For example, if you're new to double bass playing, you can focus on increasing the speed and power of your weaker foot, switching from one beater to the next larger one as that foot gets stronger.

Speaking of double bass playing, when I first tried the Superbeaters on a double pedal, the #2 balls I used hit each other, making them impossible to use. (The pedal didn't allow for a space adjustment between the beaters.) When I questioned Bill Babin about this, he said that he would also be offering beaters with their sides trimmed, which would allow them to be placed closer together. In the meantime, you'd need to make sure that the beaters you wish to use would fit on your particular pedal.

I got used to the feel of the Superbeaters very quickly, after which I enjoyed the added bass and punch that they provided. They're available in many different mixed and solid color combinations, at $16.95 to $19.95. Check them out; your feet will thank you.
(720) 276-3948, www.superbeaters.com.

Chap Ostrander



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New Paiste Signature And 2002 Classic Models

Smooth Rides And Big Crashes

HITS

new Signature models are intriguingly sized

Signature Silver Mellow ride has a low pitch and rich, slightly dry sound

2002 Classic thin crashes play well at all dynamics

2002 Classic 20" Power crash offers more than its intended role

by Martin Patmos

It's been fifteen years since Paiste introduced their Signature series, with its patented bronze alloy. Over those years the series has been augmented with dozens of interesting and sometimes esoteric models. Among the most recent of these is a 19" crash and two 21" rides—all useful additions owing to their odd sizes.

Meanwhile, the 2002 Classic series now offers an expanded selection of thin crash and Power crash models. The 2002 series, which was originally created for performance along with amplified music, has been going strong since the 1970s. The new crash models are a reflection of this heritage.

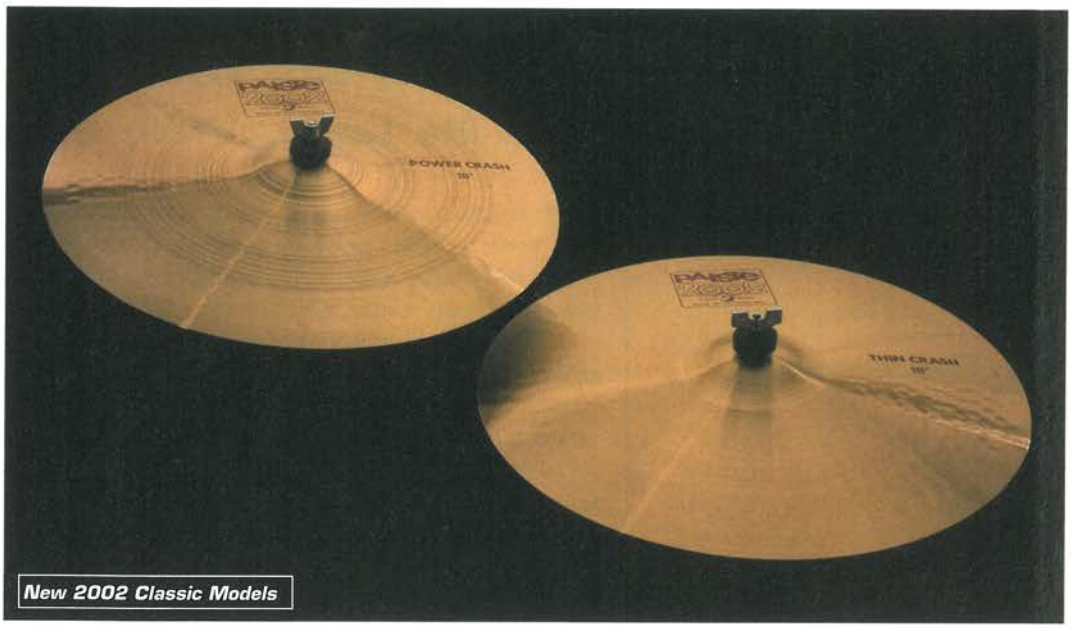
Signature 21" Silver Mellow Ride

Unlike the other two new Signature cymbals reviewed here, which expand on existing models, the Silver Mellow ride is a new design. While the cymbal has the distinct look of other Paiste Signature cymbals, its uncommon 21" diameter places it among the larger Signature ride cymbals available.

I found the Silver Mellow ride's combination of rich and dry sonic characteristics quite appealing. It responded well to the stick in a quiet to medium-loud range, producing a mellow, silvery shimmer with a nice harmonic mix. As this sound unfolded, the medium spread revealed a cushion of air underneath, which is a sound that I usually associate with a dry ride. The cymbal's overall pitch was low, providing a nice foundation when I played it in combination with other cymbals. A reliable bell echoed the characteristics of the cymbal body, while remaining distinct in sound.

This cymbal proved to be a very versatile ride. Its relatively low pitch, along with its other

New Signature Models



New 2002 Classic Models

characteristics, would allow it to fit into many settings.

Signature 21" Full Ride

This new big brother of Paiste's existing 20" Full ride is a solid, all-around cymbal with a bright, full-bodied sound and lots of projection. It offers a big wash that still maintains stick definition, along with a substantial sustain that lingers without an overly excessive buildup. This ride possesses a wide dynamic range, proving responsive to sticking patterns played from very quiet to very loud. The bell is clear and potent, with a rich tonality comparable to the body of the cymbal, and power to cut through any situation. This ride would be ideal for anyone who likes a large, rich, full sound.

Signature 19" Full Crash

This might be the perfect crash to finish off that monster fill (think John Bonham sextuplets) before heading back into the groove. With its huge, full-bodied crash, the 19" Full crash will leave no doubt as to where the chorus begins. Immediate response and a clean, bright, warm body combine to form an all-around great crash cymbal. The big initial impact opens to a wash that's followed by a measured decay before fading out. The 19" is a welcome addition to the range of Signature Full crashes that's currently available (16", 17", 18", 20"), and its odd size ought to help it find a home in existing setups.

2002 Classic Thin Crashes

Anyone familiar with the 2002 sound ought to recognize these cymbals when they hear them. As a series, the 2002 Classic Thin crashes were consistent in their characteristics. Each cymbal produced a slightly glassy crash, with an initial cut that led to a warm wash and an even decay. They all had the weight, "give," and response that one would expect from a thin crash model.

At the smaller end of the series, the 16" was excellent for punctuations and accents, and as a general crash for low- to moderate-volume applications. At the other end of the scale, the 20" crash made a more definitive statement, owing to its sheer size. The 17", 18", and 19" crashes filled the gap between these two, with each progressively larger cymbal getting lower in pitch. While they were impressive at full volume, these cymbals also performed well at quieter levels, working nicely to fill in and augment the groove. These are versatile crashes that sound excellent with each other or in combination with other models.

2002 Classic Power Crashes

The 2002 Classic Power crashes are heavier and slightly higher in pitch than their thin cousins. They had an explosive, bright, cutting impact that quickly opened up, with a wash that played out evenly through a long decay. The 16" Power crash was very versatile, and would make a good general crash in any charged situation.

The 18"—and especially the 20"—Power crashes had a lot to offer. As crashes that produce maximum impact and volume, one couldn't wish for more. But these two cymbals were also large and heavy enough to work effectively as rides. These bonus characteristics were more evident in the 20". Protracted riding on it built up a swell and crescendo that was a musically effective lead-in to the point at which I finally crashed on it.

The bells of the 18" and 20" cymbals were also interesting. They had a sound that was slightly separated from the body of the cymbal—a sort of tangy ring. Very distinctive.

Conclusion

The size range available among the 2002 Classic crashes is generous, and the odd-size Signature rides can augment any setup, as well as stand alone. Whether you prefer the amplified vibe that gave birth to the 2002s, or the more transparent sound of the Signatures, these new models have a lot to offer.

THE NUMBERS

Signature Models

21" Full ride and Silver Mellow ride	$554
19" Full crash	$480

2002 Classic Models

16" Thin and Power crash	$282
17" Thin crash	$308
18" Thin and Power crash	$342
19" Thin crash	$364
20" Thin and Power crash	$396

(800) 472-4783, www.paiste.com.

Vater Xtreme Design, Rikki Rockett, And Cyrus Bolooki Sticks

More Can Sometimes Be Less...With Good Results

HITS
unique construction and materials

distinctive sound

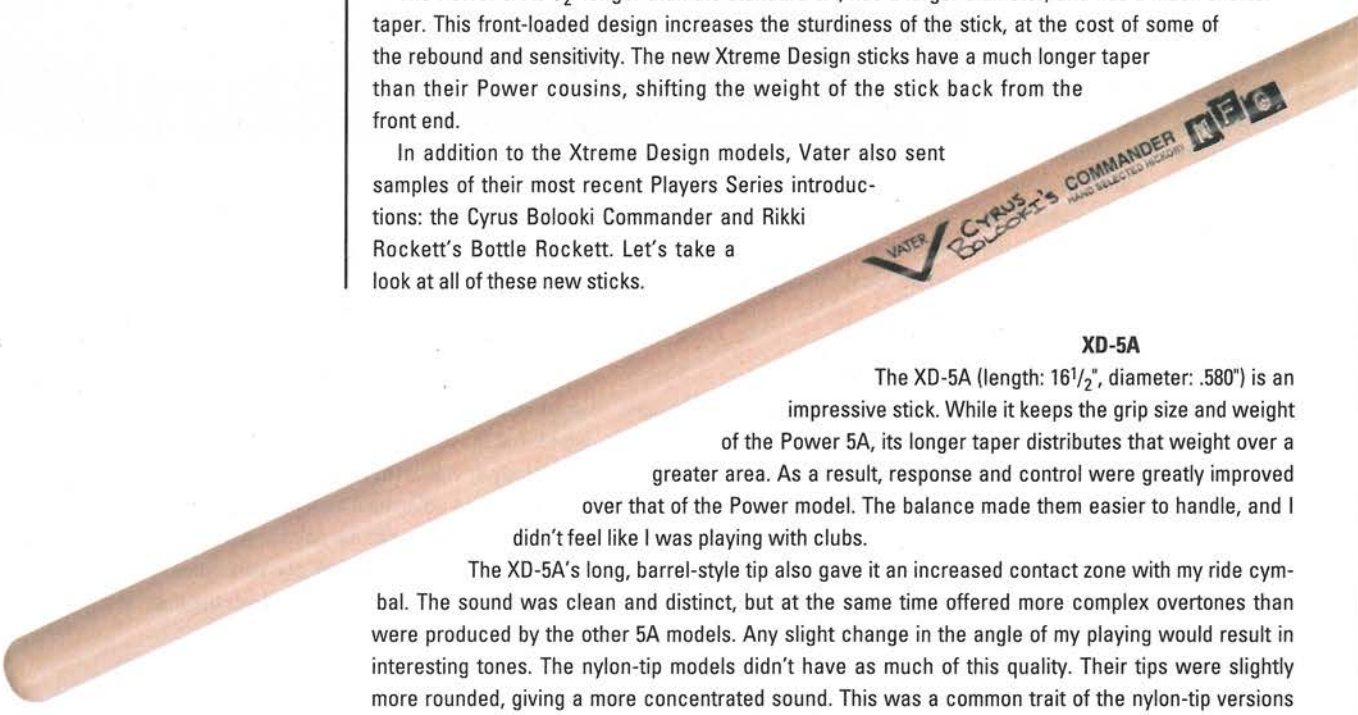
by Chap Ostrander

First came Vater's 5A and 5B models. If they weren't tough enough, you could move up to the Power 5A or 5B—which are longer and heavier—or to the Rock model, which is longer and heavier still. However, while beefier sticks give you more power and volume, they also present challenges. Your hands need to contend with the increased weight and length.

The idea of Vater's new Xtreme Design series was to come up with a stick strong enough to surpass the Power 5A and 5B, without approaching the heft of the Rock model. Vater director of artist relations & advertising Chad Brandolini sent us a pair of each new model within the series. He also sent samples of the standard 5A and the Power 5A so that we could compare them to the XD sticks.

The Power 5A is ½" longer than the standard 5A, has a larger diameter, and has a *much* shorter taper. This front-loaded design increases the sturdiness of the stick, at the cost of some of the rebound and sensitivity. The new Xtreme Design sticks have a much longer taper than their Power cousins, shifting the weight of the stick back from the front end.

In addition to the Xtreme Design models, Vater also sent samples of their most recent Players Series introductions: the Cyrus Bolooki Commander and Rikki Rockett's Bottle Rockett. Let's take a look at all of these new sticks.



XD-5A

The XD-5A (length: 16½", diameter: .580") is an impressive stick. While it keeps the grip size and weight of the Power 5A, its longer taper distributes that weight over a greater area. As a result, response and control were greatly improved over that of the Power model. The balance made them easier to handle, and I didn't feel like I was playing with clubs.

The XD-5A's long, barrel-style tip also gave it an increased contact zone with my ride cymbal. The sound was clean and distinct, but at the same time offered more complex overtones than were produced by the other 5A models. Any slight change in the angle of my playing would result in interesting tones. The nylon-tip models didn't have as much of this quality. Their tips were slightly more rounded, giving a more concentrated sound. This was a common trait of the nylon-tip versions of the other Xtremes as well.

I used the XD-5As while in rehearsal for a local show. Even though the sticks were heavier and longer than a traditional 5A, there was lots of response, and I always felt that I had full control. In other words, I didn't feel as if I had to be playing louder. But if I *wished* to play loud, the sticks were there for me.

XD-5B

The heavier XD-5Bs (length: 16½", diameter: .610") produced a more focused sound than the 5As did, with a stronger attack. I'm usually not a fan of 5B sticks in general, but this model didn't feel as

heavy as I expected, and the weight distribution gave the sticks greater playing response than that of other 5Bs. The rounded barrel tip produced the same overtones as the 5A.

XD-Rock

The XD-Rock model (length: 16 1/2", diameter: .630") is designed in the same style as the others, with the rounded barrel tip and the long taper. The grip is definitely larger than that of the standard Rock model, and the stick is heavier overall. But the taper and the resulting weight distribution gave the stick much more "feel" than the standard Rock stick offers. While it produced the impact power and volume of some marching sticks I've played, it felt better and was easier to control. It was like a war club with finesse.

Cyrus Bolooki's Commander

Cyrus Bolooki of New Found Glory designed his Commander model to embody elements that he liked from previous Vater sticks. It has a full-sized barrel-type tip, a grip size (.590") that puts it between a 5A and 5B, and a 16 1/4" length that's just over that of a 5A. The stick proved surprisingly responsive and well balanced. The tip *looked* large, but in use it didn't feel that way. I tried the sticks out in a variety of styles, and they produced distinct and full sounds from cymbals and drums.

Rikki Rockett's Bottle Rockett

The Bottle Rockett has the grip size of a 5A (.580") and the length of a 5B (16 3/8"). It features a unique contoured "handle" as an integral part of the grip. The idea is to keep your hold on the stick secure while playing or twirling. The sticks have a gradual taper, and the resulting balance gave me lots of rebound, making the sticks unusually sensitive. I found them applicable for use in all styles. They were enjoyable and comfortable to play with. (The twirling I'm still working on.)

Conclusion

Vater has been working hard to offer drummers stick choices that satisfy their particular needs. The Xtreme Design Series offers increased weight and durability without sacrificing response. I found it refreshing to use a heavy stick that still offered good playability. The two new artist-designed sticks reflect the style of their namesakes' playing, and are thoughtfully designed and well finished. Good job all around.

THE NUMBERS

	Wood Tip	Nylon Tip
XD-5A	$12.45	$12.90
XD-5B	$12.45	$12.90
XD-Rock	$12.45	$12.90
Cyrus Bolooki's Commander	$13.50	N/A
Rikki Rockett's Bottle Rocket	$13.50	N/A

(781) 767-1877, www.vater.com.

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Every year, *MD*'s Consumers Poll gives you the opportunity to state your preferences regarding today's innovative and exciting percussion products, as well as the manufacturers who make them. Please take a moment to read the following instructions. Then use one of the two formats outlined on the next page to submit your votes. Poll results will be published in our November 2004 issue.

Most Innovative Manufacturer

In the past twelve months, which manufacturers have consistently provided products demonstrating the best new ideas? Which manufacturers have produced products that were both new *and* useful—as opposed to gimmicks or fads?

Best Quality And Craftsmanship

Which manufacturers do you think produce the most reliable and trouble-free products or equipment? Which demonstrate the greatest attention to quality control?

Most Consumer/ Service Oriented

Which manufacturers give the best warranty service, repairs, and replacements? Which have the quickest deliveries or turnaround time for servicing? Which offer the most information *before* the sale, in terms of easy-to-use catalogs, informative flyers, or other consumer-oriented literature?

Most Interesting Advertising Campaign

Which manufacturer presented the ad that you found the most intriguing, exciting, and original. Whose ad particularly caught your attention? Whose ad gave you the incentive to go out and examine a product more closely?

Most Valuable Product

What product, introduced in the past twelve months, has made your playing life easier, offered you more musical creativity, or in some other way improved your situation more than any other? Please be specific as to model, size, and other descriptive information.

Comments

Please cite examples of specific products, services, or policies that led you to vote for a given manufacturer in each category. For the category of Ad Campaign, please describe the particular ad, and give your reasons for choosing it. For the category of Most Valuable Product, please briefly explain your reasons for choosing that product.

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Acoustic Drum Manufacturer_____
Cymbal Manufacturer_____
Percussion Manufacturer_____
Electronics Manufacturer_____
Accessory Manufacturer_____

BEST QUALITY AND CRAFTSMANSHIP

Acoustic Drum Manufacturer_____
Cymbal Manufacturer_____
Percussion Manufacturer_____
Electronics Manufacturer_____
Accessory Manufacturer_____

MOST CONSUMER/SERVICE ORIENTED MANUFACTURER

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Cymbal Manufacturer_____
Percussion Manufacturer_____
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Accessory Manufacturer_____

MOST INTERESTING ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

Product, Manufacturer, and Ad Description _____

MOST VALUABLE PRODUCT

Product and Manufacturer_____

COMMENTS _____

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1. Go to www.moderndrummer.com.
2. Click on the ballot button located on the home page.
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4. Type in your name and mailing address. Anonymous email entries will be disqualified.
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Your browser must accept cookies for your vote to count.

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1. Use the ballot above (or a copy).
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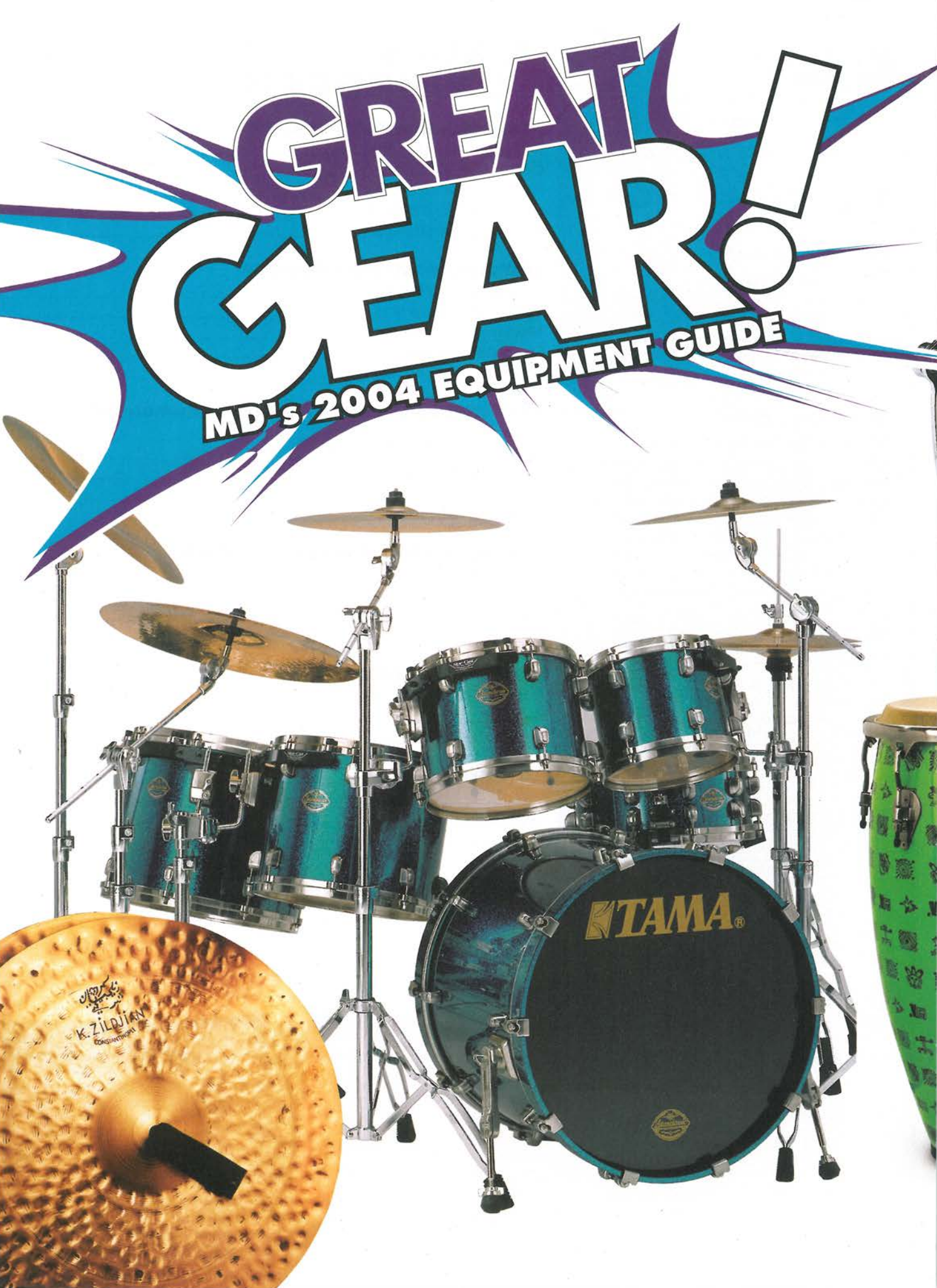
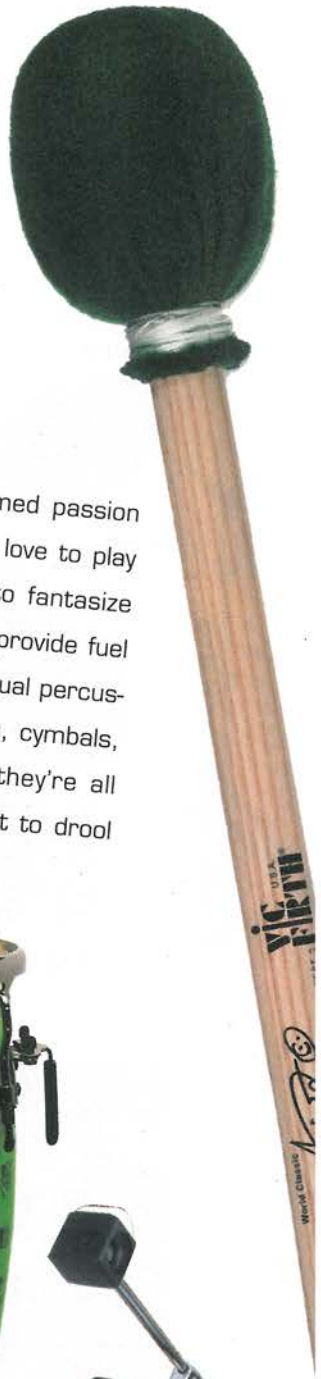
3. Mail to: Modern Drummer Consumers Poll, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.

All ballots must be postmarked no later than June 15, 2004.

GREAT GEAR!

MD's 2004 EQUIPMENT GUIDE





We drummers have an unashamed passion for the tools of our trade. We love to play the gear that we have, and we love to fantasize about gear that we *don't* have. To help provide fuel for those fantasies, here's *MD*'s fifth annual percussion products pictorial. The latest drums, cymbals, percussion, electronics, accessories...they're all here. So sit back and enjoy! (Just try not to drool on the pages, okay?)

Drum Workshop is now offering drums with VLT Shell Technology. Instead of all the plies running horizontally (around the drum), the inner and outer plies are vertical. This is said to dramatically lower the fundamental pitch of the shell. Also new is a stand-up Cocktail Kit configuration (right) that incorporates a cable-operated bass drum pedal.

DW has also added five Graphics finishes to its Collector's Series lacquer finish options. These include flames (below, left), barbed wire, skulls, solar flares, and lucky dice & cards. Each graphic is available in a wide choice of colored bursts and fades on solid colored backgrounds.

DW's new 5000 series hardware (below, right) is designed to provide heavy-duty performance and durability at a price that most working drummers can afford. Features include heavy-gauge tubing, fine-toothed tilter cymbal adjustment, double-braced legs, memory locks, and ball-bearing hinges on hi-hats. Models include regular and lighter-weight cymbal and hi-hat stands, along with a snare stand.

DW's HardCore bass drum beater (below, bottom right), designed by Bob Gatzen, features a hard plastic core imbedded in soft rubber foam. When played softly, it sounds much like a pure felt beater. When struck hard, it provides the attack of a hard plastic or wood beater. The HardCore comes with an adjustable counterweight.

(805) 485-6999, www.dwdrums.com.

Evans new Strata series offers concert snare, tom, bass, and timpani heads. They're said to offer traditional sound and appearance, with "the manufacturing consistency that percussionists have come to expect from Evans."

Timpani heads are pre-tensioned with an insert ring for tuning consistency and additional hoop support. They feature a smooth, calf-colored coating designed to prevent mallet wear while enhancing the sound of the head. Concert snare heads come in 7-mil or 10-mil thicknesses, and are said to yield "a dark timbre with a warm, natural sustain, and midrange overtones." Strata Staccato snare heads come with a 2-mil overtone control ring for increased articulation.

The 10-mil concert tom heads have a dark fundamental, with a warm and round tone. Concert bass heads are available in 28", 30", 32", 36", and 40" sizes, with or without a Central Power Dot.

(800) 323-2746, www.evansdrumheads.com.

A new strap-drive system is available on **Gibraltar**'s Intruder single and double pedals. The system is said to be fast and responsive, with a Kevlar strap that will not stretch with use. The pedals also feature footboard height adjustment (independent of spring tension or beater angle), a fast rocker with die-cast bearings, and a quick-release Rock Stabilizer plate. The single pedal is priced at $179, the double pedal sells for $429.
(860) 509-8888, www.kamanmusic.com.

Gretsch's Custom Series LTD '70s sets (left) offer the original Gretsch maple shell design, with specially cut bearing edges. Drums feature coated Permatone heads, die-cast hoops, T-rods on bass drums, and Gretsch's '70s Stop Sign badge design. Production will be limited to 100 kits in Walnut and Antique Maple Gloss finishes. Retail price for a three-piece shell pack is $4,310 with a 20" bass drum and $4,420 with a 22" bass drum. Retail price for a matching 5x14 snare (sold separately) is $790.

Gretsch has also introduced New Classic snare drums (below). This series features a classic tube lug design with three different shell materials to choose from. Drums are available in 4x14 and 5x14 thin-shell models, 5½x14 and 6½x14 models featuring the classic Gretsch maple shell, and 5x14 and 6½x14 black brass models with gold-accented hardware. All feature the Nickelworks throw-off, Gretsch Permatone heads, and an embossed New Classic logo badge that will note the year of production for all models. Retail prices range from $599 to $815.
(860) 509-8888, www.kamanmusic.com.

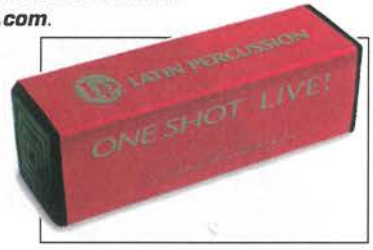
Latin Percussion's Aspire Santana Series congas and bongos (below, left) boast vivid Santana-inspired graphics and Gold Tone hardware. Their price is said to be well within the reach of working drummers, students, and collectors.

LP's One Shot Shaker Live! (below, right) is an enhanced version of the original One Shot designed by Daniel de los Reyes. It offers louder, more penetrating shots for players on noisy stages with monitors blaring.

The new Salsa Hand Held Bongo Cowbell (below, bottom right) is a medium-pitched bell that speaks with clarity. "Sweet spots" are said to emerge along the length of the body, while the contrast is strong between the mouth and the back of the bell.

LP's Matador steel basket conga stand (below, bottom left) comes in a black powder-coated finish to blend into any multiple-percussion setup. A simple lateral adjustment enables the basket "triad arm" to hold virtually any LP brand conga, while convenient height adjustments make it simple to get the drum to a comfortable playing position. The unit sets up and breaks down quickly for ease of transit.

(973) 478-6903, www.lpmusic.com.



Ludwig's Classic Maple kits, snare drums, and component drums are now available in African bubinga (above, top) and bird's-eye maple exotic finishes. In addition Ludwig has issued their ninety-fifth anniversary Special Edition snare drums. The drum shown above features a solid maple 5½x14 shell finished in a cherry stain, with single-flange brass hoops and die-cast claw hooks for a vintage look. The drum also features brass tube lugs, a brass-plated Millennium snare strainer, Puresound brass snares, and a vintage-style oval badge. Each drum comes in a plush-lined wooden case with a leather-like covering. Retail price is $1,595.

(574) 875-1976, www.ludwig-drums.com.

Mapex's new Orion Orbitor maple drumsets (near right) feature ultra-thin shells with single-point contact low-mass lugs for maximum resonance, along with color-matched lacquered bass drum hoops. The drums feature Mapex's Isolated Tom System suspension mounting. Sets retail between $999 and $1,499 and are available in Aquamarine, Tobacco Fade, and Boston Pewter high-gloss lacquer finishes.

Mapex is also offering Benchmark Copper drumsets in Pro-M and M-Series limited editions (right center). Sets are available in two configurations, both featuring an 18x22 bass drum and an optional 7x8 rack tom.

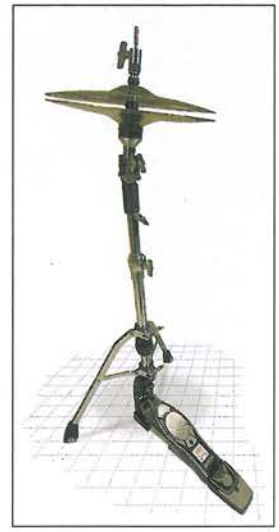
Mapex's Janus Ergo hat (far right) was developed in conjunction with hardware inventor Gary Gauger. The head of the Ergo Hat can tilt and swivel into hundreds of positions. The baseplate is built for maximum stability on any surface. The legs on the stand can easily be removed, allowing the stand to be clamped to other hardware for additional flexibility. The Janus Ergo Hat is available with the swivel top ($229.99) and without it ($179.99).

(695) 793-2050, www.mapexdrums.com.

New 13" ($389) and 14" ($452) Dry hi-hat models have recently been added to **Meinl**'s Byzance cymbal series (right). These hi-hats are said to offer dark, dry sounds with great definition for contemporary music demands.

Meinl's Marathon Exclusive conga line now features several new high-gloss finishes, including the Aztec Red Fade shown at right. In addition, Meinl has introduced several new tamborims, including models made from aluminum (far right), ABS plastic, and rubber wood in Super Natural finish. The 6" shells come with a thin plastic head and feature Meinl's Floatune tuning system. As a special feature, every tamborim includes a German pfennig coin as a tuning key.
(615) 227-5090, www.meinl.de.

Paiste's New Signature cymbals focus on individual characteristics, avoiding the sonic constraints of a series personality. The initial set of New Signature rides, crashes, and hi-hats is designated Dark Energy. Fusing the fundamental characteristics of Signature and Traditionals series cymbals, Dark Energy models are said to combine depth, darkness, total musicality, and complex harmonics with brilliance, richness, and projection. ***(800) 472-4783, www.paiste.com.***



Pearl's Masters MSX Retrospec Series (right, top) features 6-ply, 100% maple shells wrapped in a choice of five premium Italian coverings, including all-new Amethyst. The kit shown here also features Pearl's new curved rack and angle-adjustable boom-arm clamps.

Masterworks custom drums now feature improved OptiMount tom arms, as well as BRL Bridge lugs with built-in swivel points that allow maximum tuning range without the potential binding of the tension rods.

The mid-level Session Series now offers SBX kits with 6-ply 100% birch shells, in Vintage Wine, Solid Black, Tobacco Burst, and Blue Burst lacquer finishes.

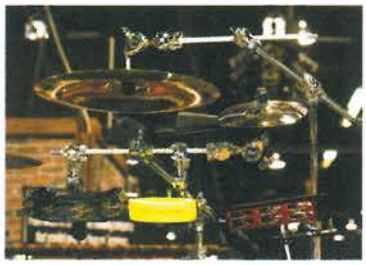
In percussion, Bobby Allende congas and bongos (center, left) were created with the seated player in mind. The 28"-tall congas feature seamless fiberglass shells, extra-wide base, and stability, in a Café Con Leche finish. A new rim design improves playing comfort while accenting the Remo FiberSkyn 3 heads.

Richie Flores Signature congas and bongos (center, right) feature oak shells and buffalo skins for a natural sound. The series includes a 10" requinto as a higher-pitched "solo" drum. The finish is a Caribbean Lime base accented by individually hand-stamped Aztec, Incan, and Mayan symbols.

The Marc Quiñones Signature timbale set (bottom, left) consists of 14" and 15" drums fitted with Remo clear Ambassador heads. The polished steel shells have two inverse beads that add strength and produce a cutting cascara (side of the shell) sound. Tuning is made easy by top-tuning lugs, and the whole unit can be mounted in seconds using a one–wing nut design.

Pearl's 2000 Series hardware features rattle-free joints, parallel double-braced legs, and oversized shock-absorbing rubber feet. The BC-2000 cymbal boom (bottom, right) features multiple articulation points for greater positioning flexibility, as well as a GyroLock tilter that can be attached in different directions on the boom. Cymbal stands also feature Pearl's new Winglock snap-on/snap-off wing nuts. The S-2000 snare stand can accept drums from 10" to 16" in diameter, while its GyroLock tilter allows offset positioning. The stand also features push-button spiked rubber feet.

(615) 833-4477, www.pearldrum.com.



Premier's high-end Premier Series kits are available in twenty-nine different finishes. The most popular are Sparkle Lacquer finishes, such as the Red Moon Sparkle on the Keith Moon configuration shown here.

In addition, Modern Classic snare drums are now available to match each Premier Series finish. New Modern Classic models are available in birch and Gen-X (maple/birch hybrid) shells, while the mid-range Artist Series now features several new snare models of its own.

(781) 659-4969, www.premier-percussion.com.

New products from **Pro-Mark** include (from left in photo at right) Webs plastic brushes, newly redesigned TB4 retractable wire brushes, Matt Savage XB1 rubber-tipped practice sticks, and 5B, 5A, and 7A sizes of ProRound round-tipped drumsticks.

The company has also introduced the X-Grip Stand Mount (below). The device allows the company's large and medium-sized X-Pad Practice Pads to be mounted on any cymbal stand that has an 8-mm thread. ***(877) 776-6275, www.promarkdrumsticks.com***.

Regal Tip's E Series line features a specially designed nylon tip that provides a unique compromise between the durability of a nylon tip and the warm, mellow tonality of a wood tip. Also new are Metal X and Ping models. ***(716) 285-3546, www.regaltip.com***.

The 8'-diameter gong drum from **Remo** shown below is the largest production drum made today. It's also available in 32", 46", and 60" sizes.

Remo's new Thomas Lang Practice Kit (below, right) includes one 13¼" pad, four 8" pads, and two bass drum pads designed to be used with a double pedal. The 8" and 13¼" pads each consist of a circular steel baseplate and interchangeable surface pads that allow the kit to emulate the feel of different playing surfaces. For the bass drum, twin systems consisting of a silicone pad, a pedal attachment, and an inverted bass drum beater provide a quiet yet realistic feel. (Pedals are not included.)

The modular practice system also includes an angle-adjustable snare drum–pad stand, a drumstick holder, and a case with wheels for easy transport. The included music stand is mirrored to allow attention to hand position while practicing. When laid flat, it can hold a laptop for practicing with DVDs or music on the computer. ***(661) 294-5600, www.remo.com***.

Roland's flagship V-Pro TD-20S-BK electronic drumkit (right, top) features the TD-20 module with expanded sounds and editing capabilities, along with improved mesh V-Pads with rimshot triggering on toms, the new V-Hi-Hat with full motion capability, and an ergonomically designed curved drum stand. All cabling can be concealed inside the stand's tubing, and height adjustments are made via quick-release cam levers with durable T-fittings.

The mid-price V-Tour Series TD-6S kit (below, left) includes the TD-6V module with all-new kits and patterns, a PD-80R mesh V-Pad for snare drum, new gum-rubber tom and hi-hat pads with dual-trigger capabilities, an improved vertical kick trigger, and two new CY-8 Cymbal Pads that feature a swinging motion and choke capabilities. The kit is mounted on the MDS-6SL silver-finished drum stand.

The entry-level V-Compact Series TD-3S kit (below, right) includes the TD-3 Percussion Sound Module (with 114 professional drum sounds, 32 kits, and a simple user interface), along with new dual-trigger pads and cymbals, the FD-8 Hi-Hat Controller, an upright kick trigger, and onboard rhythm training exercises. The kit's MDS-3C stand has a stylish black finish.
(800) 386-7575, www.rolandus.com.

Sabian's Paragon Neil Peart Signature cymbals (left, top) were created in collaboration with the poll-topping drummer for Rush. The cymbals are made using elements of Sabian's AA, AAX, and Hand Hammered lines. The natural-finished cymbals feature logo stamping in subtle "Rich Gold" ink. In addition to being sold individually, the new line is offered in a Performance set, an Effects pack, and a complete Neil Peart setup configuration, which comes with a free flight case. (See the *Product Close-Up* review on page 26.)

Also new is the HHX Manhattan Jazz range (left, center), said to offer "tone and personality, with a dirt-edged presence that swings supremely." The XS20 line of affordable professional-quality cymbals has been expanded with Concert Band pairs (left, bottom) and suspended cymbals, while effects cymbals are represented by new Banda Turca models. These relatively small, medium-heavy hand cymbals are said to have a dark timbre and shimmering sound.

Legendary drummer/composer Jack DeJohnette has teamed up with Sabian to produce Resonating Bells. These heavy, modified globes of B8 bronze are strobe-tuned, and are available in a complete octave from C to high C.
(506) 272-2019, www.sabian.com.

Sonor is promoting the acoustic potential of combining percussion instruments with a traditional drumset. The Delite kit shown at right has been augmented with several unique instruments, including Sonor's new Jam Tubes. They're made of a fiberglass and natural bamboo composite, and are available in four different sizes for unique and distinctive sounds. Optional holders are available in two sizes.

Sonor's 8x20 African kpanlogo (top right) features a deer-design graphic on the hevea wood shell, Xlite rims, a buffalo-skin head, chrome-plated hardware, and a rubber floor ring for stability.

The Cubano tumbadora (far right) complements Sonor's existing Cubano conga range. It measures 12½x18 and features a fiberglass shell, buffalo-skin heads, chrome-plated hardware, and a Cuban-style rim.

Sonor timbales (far right) feature chrome-plated metal shells, white-coated heads, and tom prism clamps for individual drum setups. They are compatible with Sonor 600 and 400 Series tom stands.

Sonor's mid-priced 400 Series double pedal (bottom left) is now available for left side–oriented playing. The pedal features single-chain drive, Giant Step–style footboards, stabilizing plates, two-way beaters, adjustable toe stops, and newly designed clamps for optimum grip. Every pedal comes packaged in its own black carrying bag, at a list price of $299.

New percussion hardware includes a Double Conga Stand (bottom right) with a quick-release swivel hinge, a bongo stand (center, bottom) with an extremely low adjustment for percussionists who traditionally sit while playing, and a Multi Percussion Stand (said to be ideal for African kpanlogos, udu drums, djembes, tablas, surdos, congas, and many other percussion instruments).

(804) 515-1900,
www.hohnerusa.com, www.sonor.com.

Tama's Starclassic Exotix drums for 2004 (left) feature eight plies of African bubinga and one outer ply of richly detailed quilted bubinga enhanced by a high-gloss Quilted Bubinga Burst finish. The darker portion of the burst harmonizes with the brushed black nickel shell hardware. Hand-laid abalone highlights the imprinted Exotix emblem. All toms feature Tama's Star-Cast free-suspension mounting system. Toms and snares are equipped with die-cast hoops, and the bass drum is fitted with an Earth Tone goatskin front head with a special star logo. Only 150 seven-piece kits ($7,299.99 with hardware) and 300 individual 6x14 snare drums ($699.99) will be made.

Tama's Starclassic Maple series (below, far left) now features a new Blue Sparkle finish, bringing the number of available finishes to twenty-one. Meanwhile, the entry-level Swingstar series (below, near left) is now offered in five-piece "Ready To Rock" pre-pack kits with Accel-Sized toms, thrones, and German-made cymbals. Four different configurations are available, at $999.99.

Tama has also introduced a limited-edition TotalWood snare drum (below, far right) featuring a 9-ply maple shell covered in a tenth ply of bird's-eye maple. It's fitted with cherry wood hoops and is available in Autumn Sunburst (pictured) and Charcoal Bird's-Eye Maple finishes, at $499.99.

Tama says their GRK10 Gearless Ratchet key (below) is simpler to use than standard ratchet tuning keys. It's also quieter than other ratchet keys, and is designed to be especially convenient in tight quarters, since you don't need to let go of the handle each time you turn. List price is $12.50.

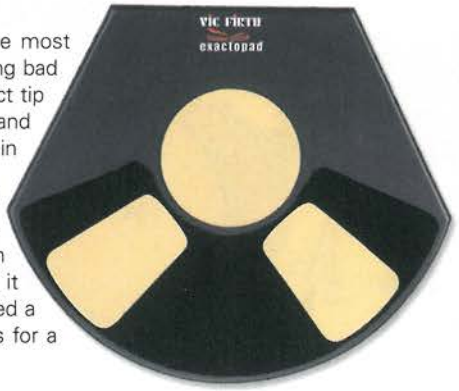
(215) 638-8670, www.tama.com.

Toca's new Traditional Series Dark Walnut congas and bongos (right) feature Asian oak Afro-Cuban shells with a dark walnut finish, Antique Brushed Gold hardware, and traditional-style rims with extended collars. The 30"-tall drums are said to offer "a throaty timbre and enhanced bass," due to extremely tapered shells that focus low frequencies. They're fitted with matching bison heads and four-bolt tension hardware. The bongos are similarly rich in appearance and features. The congas range in price from $339.50 to $415.50, while the bongos list for $229.50.

Also new from Toca is a set of dual doumbeks on a stable, wide-based stand (left). A sturdy center rod and angling mechanism allow drummer/percussionists to put the instruments within reach. The 8" and 10" doumbeks are made of lightweight fiberglass and come fitted with fully tunable plastic heads. They're finished in a jet-black gloss. List price is $349. ***(860) 509-8888, www.kamanmusic.com***.

Vater's Xtreme Design Series models (from top: XD-5A, XD-5B, and XD-Rock) have been designed in response to drummers asking for stick models in between the manufacturer's Power 5A/Power 5B models and their Rock model. Other recent introductions include the Rikki Rockett Bottle Rocket and Cyrus Bolooki Commander models. (See the *Product Close-Up* review on page 34.) ***(781) 767-1877, www.vater.com***.

The Heavy Hitter Practice Pad series from **Vic Firth** is designed to provide the most authentic feel possible while helping the player to maximize practice time and avoid developing bad drumming habits. The Exactopad (shown at right) provides a center playing area to help perfect tip placement, while adjustable guide zones train the player to pull straight back for rimshots and ensure symmetrical stick angles. The pad is built to sit on a 14" drum if desired. Other pads in the series include small and large Quadropads, the Stockpad, and the Slimpad.



Legendary drummer/percussionist Airto has designed Firth's Brazilian Street Beat 1 and 2 beaters (below, top) for use on surdos. They feature tapered ash shafts and foam cores covered with synthetic felt for a clear and solid sound. For marching drummers, the Scott Johnson "Vega" Tenor Stick (below, center) has a hard, spun-felt ball attached to the butt end, making it useful for fast changes between nylon and felt sounds. And for timpanists, Firth has introduced a complete line of Tim Genis Signature timpani mallets (below, bottom) with persimmon shafts for a dark sound. ***(781) 326-3455, www.vicfirth.com***.

Yamaha's new Stage Custom Advantage Nouveau kit (right) offers the Stage Custom Advantage shell, FRP (composite) Nouveau lug casings, and a choice of birch or oak outer ply, at a retail price of $1,349.

Yamaha has also redesigned its entire line of metal snare drums (below, left) to feature "seamed" shells, in order to reduce cost. This has allowed for new improvements, including snare-wire holders that detach from the butt and throw-off without losing their grip on the snares.

Yamaha recently upgraded its DTX line of electronic drumkits, including the introduction of the DTXPRESSIII ($1,295) and DTXPRESSIII Special ($1,995) entry-level kits, and the high-end DTXTREMEIIS kit ($3,195) shown below. All three models feature enhanced acoustic and programming capabilities, along with improved pads and other functional features.

(714) 522-9011, www.yamahadrums.com.

Zildjian's new K Custom Session cymbals (near right) were developed in conjunction with Steve Gadd. The line, which includes 14" hi-hats, 16" and 18" crashes, and an 18" ride, is based on Steve's personal set of cymbals. The hi-hats have a medium-weight top and a lighter, medium-thin bottom. The crashes are thin, for a low, dark sound with a quick decay. The unlathed 18" ride has a brilliant finish. It also utilizes new hammering techniques for a controlled sound that is low in pitch but has enough spread to ride on top of the music.

Also new are five sizes of K Custom Dry crashes (top right), designed to complement Zildjian's K Custom Special Dry ride and hi-hats. The crashes are said to have very clear articulation and focused stick definition.

Responding to consumer demand for larger, more powerful cymbals, Zildjian offers new 15" K and A Custom hi-hats, along with 20" A Custom crash and Projection crash models (center, right). At the other end of the scale, the sweet-sounding Armand ride (center, left) is a 19" A model with three rivets, based on a favorite cymbal of Armand Zildjian.

Adrian Young plaid and Travis Barker checkerboard patterns adorn new Zildjian Artist Series drumstick bags (right).

(781) 871-2200, www.zildjian.com.

Of Special Interest

The **Alchemy** brand line now includes a complete series of Professional Power cymbals, including 8" and 10" splashes, 16", 17", and 18" crashes, a 20" ride, 14" hi-hats, and a 16" China.
(213) 624-4264, www.alchemycymbals.com.

Beato has introduced hardware bags that come equipped with heavy-duty wheels to make the transport of gear more convenient. The bags have a zip-around-the-top lid for easy access. They come in medium, large, and extra-large sizes, and are available in the Cordura and Pro I (Tolex) series. All Beato bags are made in the US.
(310) 532-2671, www.beatobags.com.

Aquarian's new Focus-X texture-coated single-ply head uses a specially designed ring under the outside edge to control overring without losing snare sensitivity and drumhead response.
(714) 632-0230, www.aquariandrumheads.com.

The New Orleans Series from **Bosphorus** seeks to capture the swampy, earthy sound of the Crescent City's jazz and funk drummers.
(770) 205-0552, www.bosphoruscymbals.com.

Audio-Technica's affordable Midnight Blues mic's are said to provide standout clarity for instruments, plus all-metal construction for trouble-free performance. The MB2k unidirectional dynamic instrument mic' ($79 with cable) and the MB4k cardioid condenser mic' ($139 with cable) each feature a soft-touch finish for a secure grip and low mechanical noise.
(330) 686-2600, www.audio-technica.com.

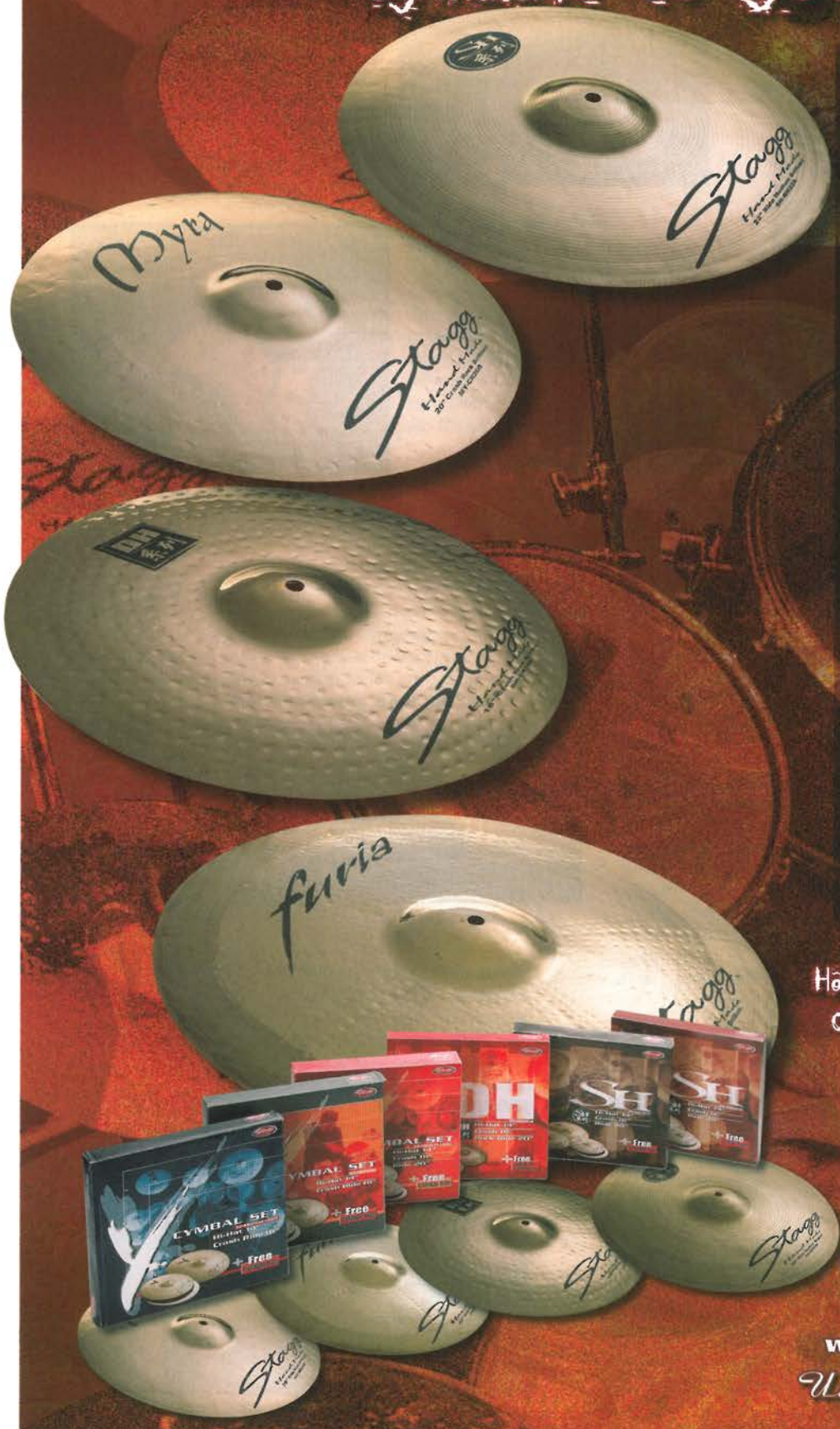
The specialty kit shown here illustrates **Brady**'s capability to create unique snare drums (including new 8" and 16" diameters and a 12x16 "bass drum" snare), along with wood timbalitos and timbales. Also shown is the 12"-deep ET bass drum, which can be used as an individual drum or as an extension to an existing bass drum to add extra depth to its sound. Drumsets of marri and karri Australian hardwoods have also been introduced, in configurations including the Bonzo-style oversized model shown at right.
(011) 618-9497 2212, www.bradydrums.com.au.

The new **Audix** I-5 was developed in response to requests from drummers for a high-performance snare-drum microphone.
(800) 966-8261, www.audixusa.com.

This walnut-finished kit from **Cadeson**'s top-of-the-line Impact series features die-cast brass lugs and hardware with a zinc-plated finish. The company also offers snare drums of solid die-cast bronze, bird's-eye maple, and hammered bronze.
(626) 369-0253, www.cadesonmusic.com.

EMD Graphics 11/2003

What makes Stagg Series cast cymbals so good?



Drummers agree on what makes the best cymbals:

- B20 Bronze... a cast mixture of 80% copper and 20% tin
- Hand Lathing... to create the perfect balance, weight and sound texture from each cast.
- Hand Hammering... the craftsman creates the unique sound of each individual instrument, define the shape and tuning with experienced hands.
- A rich variation of sound and color that defines the drummer's individuality.

Each Stagg Series Cymbal is the result of skill and dedication passed on from one generation to the next. Genuine handmade instruments, not copied or mass produced. We know you will find your true sound in this range of cymbals.

Handmade cymbals worthy of great performances

Stagg
Universe of Music

www.staggmusic.com

Universe of Music

"For Further information please contact EMD Music, Inc. • usa@emdmusic.com -email" • 866 871 5800 Toll Free

Canopus has brought back the single-headed tom sound of the 1970s, but with a new construction approach. The 8", 10", 12", 14", and 16" toms feature reinforcement hoops on the shell bottoms to focus internal sound and reduce undesirable overtones. Also new are an oak ply snare drum and an oil-finished maple snare.
(888) 860-1668, www.canopusdrums.com.

This engraved Lord Of The Rings snare from **Dunnett Classic Drums** is a 6½x14 brass drum with die-cast hoops, all plated in 24-karat gold. Dunnett now offers complete drumkits that feature 6-ply shells with four core plies of gum and inner and outer plies of maple. Also new is a throw-off design that combines piston and swivel action.
(604) 643-9939, www.dunnett.com.

Fibes is now making ply drumshells and hoops at their plant in Austin, Texas. They've also introduced solid-shell snare drums, along with a new lavender color in the Crystalite (acrylic) series. Pink Crystalite has been reintroduced as well.
(512) 416-9955, www.fibes.com.

C&C specializes in custom finishes over handcrafted maple or birch drums. Unique among these is a series of genuine paua (abalone) and sea-snail shell materials, such as the Paua Heart Black finish shown here. Drums are available with four different lug designs.
(816) 468-1121, www.candccustomdrums.com.

GMS now offers combination maple/birch drums (below, left), with a core of six birch plies between inner and outer plies of maple. The company has also created a new Special Edition Maple Bonzo-sized kit with a sleek, minimalist lug design (below, right), as well as a compact kit dubbed the Subway Series.
(631) 293-4235, www.gmsdrums.com.

The **Craviotto Drum Company** has entered the custom-snare arena with solid-shell drums made of American ash, bird's-eye maple, black cherry, and mahogany. The drums shown here include (clockwise from top) 4x14 mahogany, 5½x14 ash, 5½x14 mahogany, and 5½x13 ash models.
(831) 763-0855, www.craviottodrums.com.

Along with complete electronic pad kits, **Hart Dynamics** offers trigger devices like these Hart Hammers. They're compact rubber pads that are easy to fit around a drumkit to trigger cowbell, block, or other percussion sounds.
(850) 654-1455, www.hartdynamics.com.

Drum Solo offers drums that feature horizontal-segment construction (as opposed to vertical staves). They also make steam-bent solid-shell snare drums and maple/gum ply kits. All drums are made from wood that has been certified for environmentally responsible sourcing. This kit of 100% cherry wood is said to have a "bright, articulate sound."
(415) 898-2647, www.drumsolo.cc.

New Enduro Pro cases from **Humes & Berg** feature a ribbed roto-molded design and wide, heavy-duty straps for additional strength. Eight contact points prevent cases from slipping off each other when stacked. Twenty-three colors are available. ***(219) 397-1980, www.humes-berg.com***.

Impact's new Drum Trunk is designed to carry four or five snare drums, or two small toms and two snares. Partitions are made on a custom basis. The trunk features six wheels on a plywood base for security and portability. The closed case can also be used as a dolly to transport other gear. ***(715) 842-1651, www.impactind.com***.

Istanbul Agop has created Special Edition Jazz rides in 19", 20", and 21" sizes, along with a 20" Traditional Trash Hit effects cymbal (at left in the photo). ***(213) 624-4264, www.istanbulcymbals.com***.

The Samatya series is the latest introduction from **Istanbul Mehmet**. ***(330) 482-5750, www.universalpercussion.com, www.istanbulmehmet.com***.

Monolith Composites has added the Odyssey all-maple drumkit series (near right) to its line of carbon-fiber and combination carbon-fiber/wood drumkits. The new drums feature Accu-vent bass drums and lightweight Nexus tom mounts (far right). Monolith also offers the ultra-light Spacerack carbon-fiber drum rack. ***(888) 858 3786, www.monolithdrums.com***.

Mountain Rythym's new bata drums (left) are made from solid staves of African mahogany, with no drill holes in their shells. The company's Simple Twist rope tuning system makes the drums much lighter than batas with metal hoops and lug-style tuning hardware. The drums are fitted with horsehide heads for the small cha cha sides and calfskin heads on the larger enu sides. Prices range from $579 to $679.

Also new are two cajon models. The one at the far right is fitted with a set of tunable guitar strings to create a "snare" effect. ***(905) 764-6543, www.mountainrhythym.com***.

Noble & Cooley is celebrating its 150th anniversary by introducing two commemorative 13" snare drums. The Alloy snare (top right, $800) features an alloy shell with staggered, nodal-mounted black chrome lugs and flanged hoops. The SE Special Edition snare (bottom right, $780) features a high-quality maple ply shell with black chrome hardware. ***(413) 562-9694, www.noblecooley.com***.

Custom drumsets made in Brazil by **Odery** include the natural imbuia wood kit shown at left. Also offered is an Air-Control snare drum, which features a vented shell-within-a-shell design (below). A special handle rotates the inner shell, adjusting how the vents align and thus how much air escapes from the shell. ***(011) 55 (19) 3277 0306, www.odery.com.br***.

Orange County Drum & Percussion makes custom drums of virtually every description. These include unique paint finishes, metal monochrome shells (with shells and hardware of the same color), and acrylic shells with engravings. The snare shown here features a thick acrylic shell and a new lug design.

(714) 564-0667, www.ocdrum.com.

Pacific Drums And Percussion's CX series features a new Silver Sparkle covered finish (right). The new MX series offers a hand-applied matte finish in Deep Red and Sea Blue, while an available 20" bass drum and six new colors have been added to the LX lacquer series. Other Pacific upgrades include a new side-to-side snare throw-off with matching butt plate, a new embossed chrome badge, and pro-style (STM) suspension tom mounts.

Also new is the 805 series of 5x8 auxiliary snare drums (left) finished in distinctive colors with contrasting hardware. They're equipped with suspension mounts for easy placement around a kit.

(805) 485-6999, www.pacificdrums.com.

Peace Drums says that their Demolition Max (below, left) is the first kit priced under $1,000 to offer a 24" bass drum. The eye-catching monster assemblage shown below right displays Peace's Octoban-style toms in custom sparkle finishes. ***(626) 581-4510, www.peacemusic.com.tw.***

Snare drums vented in a "bullet hole" pattern are available from **Pork Pie**. The company is also offering snare drums with solid cherry, maple, oak, walnut, and mahogany shells (made by Vaughncraft Percussion), as well as a 6½x14 brass tube-lug snare plated in black chrome. ***(818) 992-0783, www.porkpiedrums.com.***

This rolling cymbal case from **Protection Racket** features ProPadd P2 internal padding, described as "a new internal shock-deflection system that promises the best protection."

Also new is the Nutcase series of economy bags, featuring a two-tone color scheme with contrasting inner lining, 15-mm foam, ergonomic padded handles, and a specially designed lid-closing system.

(800) 547-6401, www.bigbangdist.com.

Puresound has expanded from accessories to drums with the introduction of their UltraSonic Custom Copper 5x14 snare. It's fitted with the company's Super-30 snares, and it comes in a padded case.

(310) 966-1176, www.puresoundpercussion.com.

Brazil's **RMV Drums** now offers this purpleheart kit, along with a new line of hardware called Hard Tech.

(011) 55 (11) 9385-1265, www.rmv.com.br.

Rocket Shells Carbon Classic snares are shown here in the four most popular sizes, with original classic black finish, upgraded lugs, and black chrome rims. The company also creates drums with exotic custom graphics integrated into their surfaces.

(916) 334-2234, www.rocketshells.com.

Shure is promoting the KSM Series, with several models useful for drum-miking applications. The KSM141 shown here is a versatile dual-pattern studio condenser.
(847) 600-2000, www.shure.com.

This custom kit in Gold Fire Sparkle Flames illustrates **Spaun**'s ability to create unique finishes. The manufacturer has also released Z Series kits, which are available in various stock configurations with no options in order to reduce cost. A five-piece kit with hardware lists for $2,599.
(909) 971-7761, www.spaundrums.com.

Slingerland's eye-catching Carmine Appice Signature kit in leopard-skin finish is the company's way of announcing the return of their American-made high-end drumkit production. The company will also offer classic Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich configurations, along with Radio King and Studio King snare drums (below).
(615) 871-4500, www.slingerland.com.

Stagg cymbals have entered the US market in a big way. The Chinese-made brand of cast and hand-hammered cymbals and gongs offers seven different lines in order to appeal to a wide variety of musical tastes.
(615) 793-8787, www.emdmusic.com.

Sol Percussion offers a variety of instruments made of recycled and scrapped rawhide, called Akblocks (left). Also new are bongo pads (below) that attach to any bongos to make them more comfortable when held between the player's knees.
(415) 468-4700, www.soldrums.com.

Sunlite is celebrating its 20th anniversary by upgrading many of its drumkit series. The Top Gun basswood kit shown here now features the same rim-mount suspension system as the more expensive Studio series, along with new satin finishes.
(626) 448-8018, www.sunlitedrum.com.

Taye's ProX-S series (right) comes in four satin-finish colors and offers all drum sizes and kit configurations. A five-piece kit lists for $750. (909) 628-9589, www.taye.com.

Taye has also introduced a boom snare drum stand (below) that can set up low for drumkit use, and high for concert use (or placement above a hi-hat on a kit). The basket can accommodate drums from 6" to 15" in diameter, and the boom/basket assembly will fit into Taye's bass drum tom mount to place the snare above rack toms.

(909) 628-9589, www.taye.com.

Turkish Cymbals have augmented their line with a new series called Golden Legend. The company also offers Millennium and Studio Elite models for contemporary music applications.

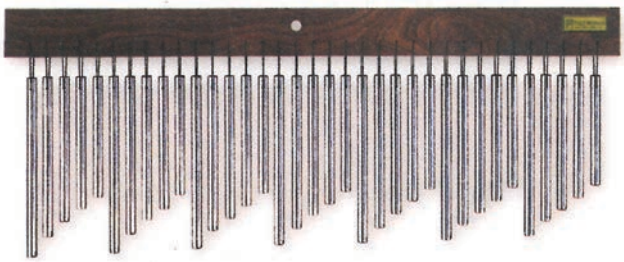
(011) 90 212 251 6992, www.turkishcymbals.com.

UFIP has introduced three new series of standard cast bronze cymbals. The Primo series shown here offers bronze cymbals priced to compete with "starter" brass cymbals. Genio cymbals are intended as practice and performance instruments for amateur and semi-pro drummers. The Ritmo series s designed for the serious professional in all aspects of drumming.

(514) 488-9564, www.ufip.com.

The new EchoTree chime from **Treeworks** features a series of five-bar groups, each of which is slightly different in pitch from the others. This results in a very complex range of tonalities that "fattens up" the overall chime sound.

(615) 780-2641, www.treeworkschimes.com.



The **Wuhan** cymbal line now offers Shining S Series (below) and Traditional 16" crashes in several different weights.

(330) 482-5750, www.universalpercussion.com.

Trick machined-aluminum snare drums are now offered with unique finishes. A special sanding and buffing process creates patterns with holographic-like depth, such as the "Trick" logo shown here.

(847) 519-9911, www.trickdrums.com.

XL Specialty Percussion's Protechtor Elite Air series now includes multi-tom cases. Built-in cradles and dividers prevent small drums from moving within the cases.

(260) 627-8070, www.xlspec.com.

And What's More

Gregg Bissonette has lent his name to **Ace Products**' Kaces Seat Stick Bag. **(415) 492-9600, www.aceproducts.com.**

Ahead has debuted the Tico Torres Signature drumstick. The Bon Jovi drummer has been a member of the Ahead team for several years. **(800) 547-6401, www.bigbangdist.com.**

Alfred Publishing offers a wide variety of beginning, intermediate, and advanced percussion titles. **(818) 891-5999, www.alfredpub.com.**

Turkish-made **Anatolian** cymbals have been available in Europe for several years. Model lines include the top-of-the-line Ultimate series, the mid-level Expression series, and the affordable Baris series. **(011) 90 212 549 7419, www.anatoliancymbals.com.**

The flagship of the **Axis Percussion** line is their classic black high-tech double bass drum pedal. **(310) 549-1171, www.axispercussion.com.**

The Danny Gottlieb Signature kit from **Basix** features 9-ply birch shells, rack-tom suspension mounts that attach below the lugs, a 12-ply snare drum, and a black-to-red fade finish. It lists for $995. **(847) 498-9850, www.basixpercussion.com.**

Bauer is a new custom drum line from Brazil. Their shells feature "wafered stave" construction that combines layers of wood within each stave for added strength and "a singing tone." **(011) 55 (12) 3978-1788, www.bauerpercussion.com.**

Blue Microphones recommends their Mouse cardioid condenser recording model for accurate reproduction of low-frequency transients, such as on kick drums. **(805) 370-1599, www.bluemic.com.**

The **Buttkicker 2** transducer is designed to help drummers "feel" the low-end that they lose with in-ear monitoring. The RK-CT Concert model is the newest introduction in the line. **(888) 676-2828, www.thebuttkicker.com.**

Buzin is a new brand of drums and cymbals. The drums feature extra-thin 5-ply shells and limited finishes, stressing quality sound over exotic appearance. A '60s-style black brass snare drum is also offered.

Buzin cymbals are hand-crafted in Turkey. They're designed to offer classic, traditional characteristics, along with new, contemporary acoustic options. **(818) 788-5550, drumconnection@sbcglobal.net.**

Clayton Cameron's new *Brushworks* book, Rick Latham's *Advanced Funk Studies* (which will see its 25th anniversary in 2005), and *In Session With The Dave Weckl Band* (charts and CDs) are offered by **Carl Fischer Music**. **(800) 762-2328, www.carlfischer.com.**

Coffin Case now offers a full-sized coffin-shaped hardware case, along with Black Cross cymbal and snare bags. **(818) 767-3511, www.coffincase.com.**

Danmar's Furball beater should appeal to jazz, studio, and other drummers seeking a subdued bass drum sound. The faux-fur covering is available in a number of styles. **(949) 756-8481, www.danmarpercussion.com.**

D.B. Musical Instruments focuses on the budget- and entry-level market, with kits like this triple rack tom model covered in a bright purple wrap. **(011) 86-769-373 8428, www.db-musical.com.**

In addition to their well-known pad kits and digital sound modules, **ddrum** offers high-quality, heavy-duty acoustic drum triggers. **(727) 519-9669, www.clavia.com.**

Drum Tech's DTS Advance Tuning System converts radial pressure from a cable around the drum to vertical pressure against the lugs. This pulls down on the drum rim and tensions the head. The cable is tensioned at only one point, but distributes that tension evenly around the drum. **(818) 886-1348, www.drumtech.com.**

The **Duallist** triple pedal is actually four pedals in one. It can be played in single beater mode with either foot, in conventional double pedal mode using both feet, in Duallist mode operating two beaters with the right foot, and in triple-beater mode using both feet for fast rolls, triplets, and shuffles. **(011) 44 1 563 555 999, www.theduallist.com.**

Encore Mallets offers a variety of drum beaters and keyboard mallets. Latex-head mallets are a company specialty. **(972) 436-6963, www.encoremallets.com.**

The **Gator** case line includes Fusion and Standard kit bag sets, the GP-007 stick bag, and a recently introduced drumhead storage/transport bag that also includes a handy exterior drumkey holder. **(813) 221-4191, www.gatorcases.com.**

Grip Peddler continues to expand its line of traction pads for bass drum–pedal footboards with new shapes, sizes, and graphic options. **(949) 361-9999,www.grippeddler.com.**

The well-known Spectrasound line of Mark Tree chimes has been upgraded and improved, and is now offered by **Grover Pro Percussion**. **(781) 935-6200, www.groverpro.com.**

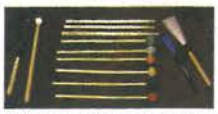
New instructional titles from **Hal Leonard** include transcriptions of Metallica's *St. Anger* CD, *The Encyclopedia Of Reading Rhythms* by Gary Hess, and *The Leonard Snare Drum Method.* **(414) 774-3630, www.halleonard.com.**

The **Hardcase** line of molded plastic cases includes this rolling cymbal case, along with a new padded snare case. **(800) 356-4326 (or) (800) 446-6010, www.hardcase.com.**

HipTrix drumsticks are touted by their manufacturer as the brightest glow-in-the-dark effects sticks ever produced. **(847) 710-2292, www.hiptrix.com.**

Recently released DVDs from **Hudson Music** include *Drummers Collective 25th Anniversary Celebration, Modern Drummer Festival Weekend 2003,* and *Thomas Lang: Creative Control.* **(914) 762-5663, www.hudsonmusic.com.**

In addition to a variety of brushes, rods, and orchestral mallets, **Innovative Percussion** now



offers Ed Soph signature drumset sticks in hickory and maple, as well as James Ancona marching keyboard mallets. **(615) 333-9388, www.innovativepercussion.com.**

Endorser Brett Chasson's Grand

Cayman Blue Metal Flake maple set with gold hardware illustrates the type of customized kits available in **Innovation Drums**' high-end Virtuoso Series. **(248) 737-0251, www.innovationdrums.com.**

This display drumkit features **Keller**'s new Vintage Mahogany shells. The company is also offering combination maple/birch shells, with other wood combinations slated to follow. Keller's goal is to offer a wide acoustic and cosmetic selection of shells to drum builders. **(603) 627-7887, www.kelleratthecore.com.**

Drum builder Sam Bacco faithfully crafts new **Leedy** snare drums according to original specifications. The line includes solid-shell wood snares, along with a Presentation Model copper-shell drum with 24-karat gold-plated hardware and 1930s-style engraving. **(912) 748-7070, www.gretsch.com.**

MC Drums is an Italian manufacturer offering custom-made drums in a variety of exotic

woods, special finishes, and unique designs. This kit features shells that separate so that the kit can be packed inside itself to travel in one storage bag. **(011) 39 0965-27737, www.mcdrums.it.**

Mel Bay's percussion-studies catalog includes *Rock Studies For Drumset* by James Morton, along with titles covering tabla, bodhran, and Latin percussion. **(636) 257-3970, www.melbay.com.**

Meredith Music has recently released an instructional text for snare drum called *Rudiments In Rhythm*, by James Campbell. **(301) 261-5015,www.meredithmusic.com.**

Besides being the new US distributor for Premier drums, **Musicorp**

offers the budget-level Percussion Plus and Enforcer drumkit lines. **(843) 763-9083, www.musicorp.com.**

The **Off-Set** double bass drum pedal incorporates a twin-slave design that positions the bass drum directly in front of the player. **(814) 672-5780, www.pointtremolo.com.**

Orion handcrafted cymbals are made in Brazil. The Revolution Pro series shown here features B8 alloy for a bright, penetrating sound. **(011) 55 (11) 3871-6270, www.orioncymbals.com.br.**

This portable, colorful practice pad from **OZ Drumpad** can be used on the knee, on a tabletop, or on a cymbal stand. **(667) 947-3867 (or) (011) 61 3 9370 1774.**

Pao Chia drums are made in mainland China. The line offers an impressive array of drumshells and finishes. **(011) 86 20 3404 2386, www.paochia.com.**

Though **Peavey** no longer makes high-end drums, they still offer their Series III entry-level kits. Silver and red coverings, as well as a black lacquer finish, are available. **(601) 483-5365, www.peavey.com.**

Percussive Innovations's Factory Metal auxiliary percussion systems include Celtic Cross models in various sizes, as well as Gothic Radius metal disks. Made of "composite metal," these new instruments provide unusual cymbal- and bell-like sounds. **(949) 400-4419, www.percussiveinnovations.com.**

Pintech's cast-metal mesh-head trigger pads are now available in nine different colors. The company also offers new electronic cymbal pads, as well as a clear acrylic drumkit fitted with mesh trigger heads. **(864) 242-2150, www.edrums.com.**

Proel specializes in pro-audio cabling products, including the EBN8 sub-snake shown here. Available in 30' or 50' lengths, it could prove useful for minimizing drum-miking cable runs. The company also distributes the Tamburo line of Italian-made drums. **(915) 591-5848, www.proelgroup.com.**

In addition to several different models of machined-aluminum drumstick holders, **QwikStix** also offers a variety of accessories, like the beverage holder shown at right. **(603) 578-0493, www.qwikstix.com.**

Products from **Rhythm Band Instruments** are targeted at very young children, with the aim of getting them interested in playing music as early as possible. **(800) 424-4724, www.rhythmband.com.**

Three sizes of tunable mbiras are offered by **Rhythms Exotic Afro Percussion**. Each can be miked up to allow percussionists to play the "box" portion with their fingers for additional percussive effects. The company is also a source for books, videos, and other information on all forms of African music. **(408) 492-9900, www.afrorhythms.com.**

Rimshot Canadian-made drumsticks are now distributed in the US. The line offers a wide variety, including Power Grooves, Pro Grip, and Pro Tip maple models. **(416) 656-8695, www.rapco.com.**

Roc-N-Soc reports renewed interest in their original five-legged steel-based Motion Throne. **(828) 452-1736, www.rocnsoc.com.**

The new R-12 all-terrain version of the **Rock N Roller** multi-cart features pneumatic front wheels for negotiating rough, uneven surfaces. **(805) 856-1701, www.danabgoods.com.**

The Q Snare mic' shown here is part of **Samson**'s 7kit seven-piece drum-miking kit, designed to combine functionality and quality at affordable prices. The 7kit also includes one Q Kick, three Q Toms, and two CO2 pencil condensers. **(516) 364-2244, www.samsontech.com.**

Sennheiser's new e614 small condenser mic' is recommended for hi-hat and overhead miking. It joins the e903 dynamic snare drum mic' in

the company's line of microphones suitable for drum applications. **(860) 434-9190, www.sennheiserusa.com.**

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The **Silver Fox** drumstick line has been augmented with two brush models. The Foxtail is a wood-handle brush with nylon bristles; Swiskas are traditional retractable wire brushes. **(781) 935-6200, www.silverfoxpercussion.com.**

SKB now makes their roto-molded drum cases with or without foam linings. Unlined cases are priced 15-20% below fully lined cases.

SKB has also introduced a complete line of marching percussion cases (such as the Quad/Quint model shown here), along with a square snare drum case for drums with extended strainers or wood hoops. **(714) 685-5232, www.skbcases.com.**

The **Slicknut** quick-release cymbal fastener now comes in a clear acrylic version in addition to the original black composite model. **(603) 329-4313, www.slicknut.com.**

The **Smartrigger** CYT-1 Electronic Cymbal Trigger mounts on any standard cymbal stand, rather than on the cymbal, thus allowing any striking surface to be used as a cymbal trigger. This includes real acoustic cymbals, practice cymbals, other manufacturer's ecymbals, plates, and even trash-can lids. Because the CYT-1 mounts directly on the cymbal stand, the cymbal is free to rotate, swing, and play naturally. Mounting the trigger at the center of the cymbal rather than on the bow is said to provide even triggering anywhere around the cymbal's surface. **Www.smartrigger.com.**

Thumpers bass drum dampeners strive to combine acoustic effectiveness with cosmetic attractiveness. The fabric-covered foam devices come in a variety of sizes and shapes. **(360) 928-3786, www.thumpersdrum.com.**

To underscore its status as a Vermont-based company, **Trueline** has redesigned its logo to create a new, sharper image. Their model line now includes (from left) Tribal Assault, Martin Atkins (Pigface), Billy Ward, Rick Steel, Chip Ritter, David Small, Charlie Waymire, and Daniel Glass sticks. **(802) 485-4900, www.trueline.com.**

Truth Custom Drums offers drums in various woods, carbon-fiber, metal, and acrylic. A wide variety of construction methods, finishes, and hardware designs are available. The kit shown here features green acrylic shells with black hardware and star-shaped lugs. **(909) 989-7467, www.truthdrums.com.**

The Lounge Lizard from **Unigrip** features a pre-shredded bamboo rod/brush end. It provides a mellower sound than the company's Flipsticks bamboo rod model. **(800) 474-7068, www.unigrip2000.com.**

Vaughncraft now offers steam-bent snare drum shells made in America and guaranteed to be in round. Shells of solid maple and exotic woods are available in 14" diameters and depths from 4" to 7".

Vaughncraft also offers handmade solid-maple tambourines with steel or brass jingles, and with staggered or in-line slots cut for maximum volume. Prices range from $55 for an 8" with steel jingles to $95 for a 10" with brass jingles. Soft cases with straps are also available. **(785) 594-6776, www.vaughncraft.com.**

Wahan Drums of Germany offers a drumkit featuring seamless clear acrylic shells. The company also manufactures snare drums with the Vario Lifter player-activated snare-tension feature. **(310) 451-5530, www.wahan.de.**

Drum books from **Warner Bros. Publications** include *The UnReel Book* (featuring Vinnie Colaiuta's playing on Randy Waldman's *UnReel* CD) and *It's About Time* by Fred Dinkins. A variety of classic Warner Bros. videos has also been re-released in DVD format, including such titles as *Gene Krupa, Jazz Legend.* **(800) 327-7643, www.warnerbrospublications.com.**

The compact Café Kit and the deeply hammered Battered Dawg metal snare drum are new to the **Worldmax** line. **(615) 365-3965,**

The **Xymox** line of practice pads includes a new marching tenor pad, along with the Muffs series of on-drum pad/silencers. **(909) 605-1887, www.xymoxpercussion.com.**

The Acclaim series is an attractive yet affordable line from the **Zenith** Musical Instrument Company. **(909) 579-0569.**

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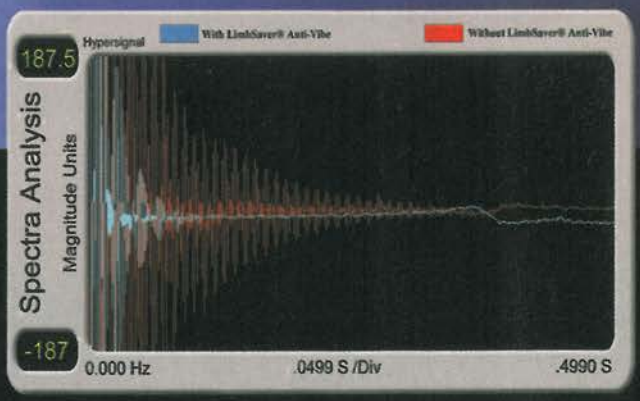

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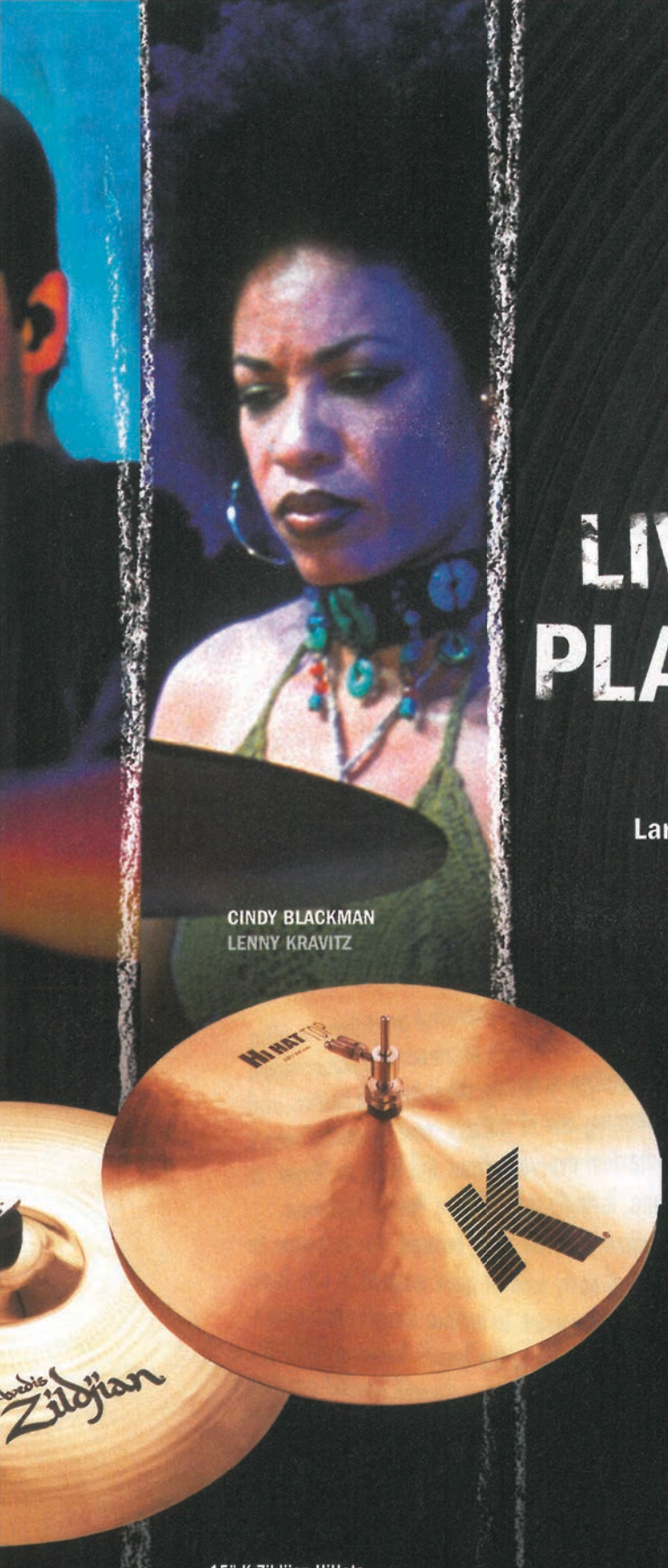

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METAL MASTER VINNIE PAUL

PANTERA OUT, DAMAGEPLAN IN

STORY BY KEN MICALLEF
PHOTOS BY ALEX SOLCA

Sometimes rock 'n' roll throws twists and turns at even its most successful practitioners. After selling thirteen million records with Texas heavy metal titans Pantera, drummer and leader Vinnie Paul figured he and his band were unstoppable. In addition to having chart-topping success and fame across nine nations, the drummer enjoyed operating one of Dallas's most successful men's clubs, The Clubhouse. Vinnie was also known to entertain everyone from Kid Rock to Slayer to John Otto at his swanky and decked-out private home, lovingly called Vinnie Paul's Playhouse.

But as the sessions for Pantera's 2000 album, *Reinventing The Steel*, ensued, Vinnie began to experience both personal and professional problems. A nasty case of gout erupted in one foot, then the other, practically disabling this party-loving drum animal. To further complicate matters, Pantera's lead singer, Phil Anselmo, was becoming a combatant in the band's business dealings, often making himself MIA whenever Vinnie and sibling guitarist Dimebag Darrell needed answers to pressing band matters. With the gout dogging him, Paul and company completed the album and a follow-up, *Revolution Is My Name*, before total professional collapse and physical exhaustion seemed imminent. But with the conviction of colonel William Travis at the battle of the Alamo, Vinnie and Dimebag forged on to create Damageplan.

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"I LOVE DOUBLE BASS, BUT I THINK A LOT OF METAL PLAYERS TODAY TEND TO OVERUSE IT. IF YOU HEAR IT ALL OF THE TIME IN THE MUSIC, IT DOESN'T HAVE MUCH OF AN IMPACT."

No less fireball-flaming and rhythmically potent than Vinnie and Dimebag's first band, Damageplan shows the dynamic duo confirming their status as metal's most lewdly talented twosome. But they've also widened their worldview, as is evident on the band's debut, *New Found Power*. Vinnie's double bass attack is more tempered than in the past, and the overall musical vision broadens to include sounds from classic rock as well as more experimental writing, recording, and tuning processes.

From the crushing opener, "Wake Up," to the truncheon-to-the-gut slam of "Blunt Force Trauma," to the slow-slung grooves of "Crawl" and "Moment Of Truth," Damageplan creates organic metal that is both ferocious and groovealicious. Singer Pat Lachman and bassist Bob Zilla bring up the rear, but as always, this is Vinnie and Dimebag's show.

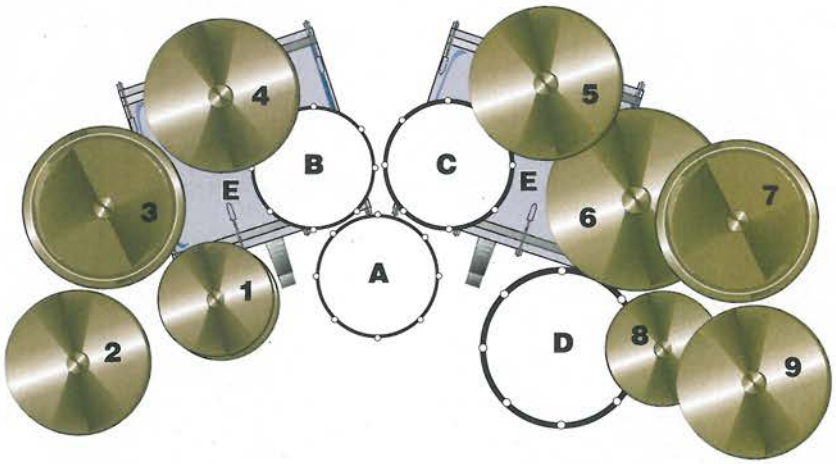
A long way from his tuba-carrying days as an elementary school student, Vinnie can lay claim to being one of the smartest and most accomplished drummers around, as a cursory reading of this article will attest. Speaking from his "playhouse"—a 24/7 party palace outfitted with a game room, a recording studio, and a swimming pool built in the shape of a Crown Royal whiskey bottle (the bottle cap is a jacuzzi)—Vinnie Paul is back at the top of his game and showing younger metal drummers exactly how the damage gets done.

Vinnie's Kit

Drums: Pearl Masters series in chrome finish
A. 8x14 wood snare (8-ply)
B. 14x14 rack tom
C. 15x15 rack tom
D. 18x18 floor tom
E. 24x24 bass drum

Cymbals: Sabian
1. 14" AA Rock hi-hats
2. 18" AA Rock crash
3. 20" AA Chinese
4. 19" Hand Hammered Rock crash
5. 19" Hand Hammered Rock crash
6. 22" Hand Hammered Power Bell ride
7. 20" AA Chinese
8. 14" AA Rock hi-hats (mounted on X-Hat)
9. 19" AA Rock crash

Hardware: All Pearl, including PowerShifter bass drum pedals (with hard plastic beater, medium-tight spring tension)
Heads: Evans Rock AF (or ST) on snare batter with Hazy 300 Resonant on snare-side, coated G2s on tom batters with Black Resonants on bottoms, EQ4 on bass drum batters with EQ3 on fronts
Sticks: Vic Firth American Classic Rock model
Electronics: Pintech pads, Akai sampler
Microphones: Shure



MD: First things first: Why did Pantera break up?

Vinnie: Pantera didn't split up over the usual reasons. There were no money issues or guys hating each other. We took a break, and then we heard that Phil Anselmo had quit the band. That would have been cool if he had called and let somebody know. But we couldn't get in touch with the dude. We tried every way to figure out what was going on, but we couldn't. So after a year, Dimebag and I realized that we didn't have a band anymore. That's where Damageplan came from.

MD: Damageplan is stylistically more diverse than Pantera. The sounds are more experimental, and some of the songs are almost classic rock. Was the goal to write more expressively?

Vinnie: Back in the day, when everybody's favorite Pantera records were *Vulgar Display Of Power* and *Cowboys From Hell*, our records were very diverse. There was no pigeonholing our style or what we could do. The music was wide-open, the songs had good melodies, and I think the records crushed from start to finish. But over the last couple of Pantera records, the songs kept getting narrower, and I felt like we were in a vacuum tube. There was no room for us to express ourselves. There wasn't any real creativity left because Phil had narrowed it down to so little. We would write songs, but nothing would work for him.

With Damageplan, we said, "There are no boundaries. Let's be wide-open to everything." We wanted to keep our old-school roots but at the same time be in tune with some of the new sounds and new ways of doing things.

MD: Your new singer is a *singer*, not just a shredder, which is also different from Pantera.

Vinnie: We listened to many singers to find the guy who could do it all; we wanted a singer and a screamer. Pat Lachman had played guitar with the Halford band, and he really liked the Damageplan demos, so he volunteered to sing. He sang over one of our tracks, and when I heard it I immediately got goose bumps.

MD: Is Damageplan more commercial than Pantera?

Vinnie: At times it is, but it's also more brutal. A song like "F*** You" is as brutal as anything we ever did in Pantera. "Crawl" is the same thing. It's brutal but with a melodic breakdown, which is something we didn't delve into that much with Pantera.

MD: What was the recording process for *New Found Power*?

Vinnie: We used an Otari Radar system, which came out around the same time as Pro Tools. We recorded it all at our studio, Chasin' Jason, on an 82-channel Mackie console into Radar.

MD: Did you record the drums any differently than with Pantera?

Vinnie: I went for a little less attack on the drums, a little more of a standard sound. I've been so used to having that abrasive, glassy sound on top. With Damageplan I wanted to add a little more body to the drum sound and a little less top-end.

When you stick a mic' in front of something, it's supposed to represent a flat sound. On the Pantera stuff, I always scooped the midrange out of the drum mix so it opened up the bottom and the top. And I usually cranked the top end with a Massenberg or Focusrite EQ, something with a nice sheen to it. But I didn't use those with Damageplan.

MD: Do you run the meters in the red when recording?

Vinnie: It ain't rock 'n' roll unless it's in the red, bud.

MD: At this point in your career, is the studio second nature for you?

Vinnie: I feel comfortable in the studio. I grew up in my dad's [Jerry Abbott] studio. That's where I started learning this stuff at an early age. I did my first Pantera demos in his studio, but I hated the way the drums sounded. So my dad let me get behind the board and play around with EQ.

MD: Do you record to a click?

Vinnie: Never with Pantera, but when writing for Damageplan, I laid down a click track and had Dime record riffs he'd been working on. I played different drum parts over that, and then we cut and pasted these ideas into songs. We did half the album that way, piecing together the songs. For the rest of it, we did it live, like a band.

MD: The drums sound fantastic on the new record, very fat and full.

Vinnie: We went for a darker sound on the record than with Pantera. We just feel that the sound is a bit more raw and matches what the band is about.

MD: What's your process for getting drum sounds?

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Vinnie: To start, I get happy with the way the drums sound in the room. My drum tech, Cat, will set them up and I'll use the appropriate mic's for the session. Cat will then play the set, drum by drum, and I'll start tweaking on the board. If I don't like the way something sounds, I might move the mic' or bring in a different one.

For Pantera records, I placed mic's inside the drums to record the attack. I also placed them in the usual position—on top, near the heads—to pick up the "body" of the drum. On the new record, I only used outside mic's. I wanted more body. I used AKG 414s on the toms, a Shure SM57 on the snare, Shure SM81s on the cymbals, and Audio-Technica ATM25s on the kick drums. As for how much time I take, if I was doing a demo for someone, it would probably take an hour to get the drum sounds. For Damageplan, it took a couple days.

MD: You have a compressed, in-your-face drum sound on record. How much of that is tuning and how much is board tweaking?

Vinnie: The drums are the drums. Once you tune them, that's how they sound. You manipulate the sound from there. On "Moment Of Truth," which is a slow, sludgy song, it needed some weight. So I used more of the room mic's to add ambience and ring. I also added more attack with the EQ.

MD: How tight do you tension your heads?

Vinnie: Everything is pretty loose. And I don't use muffling, except on the bass drums. I took the front bass drum heads off for this record and went for more of an old-school vibe, with some blankets placed inside the drums to warm up the sound.

MD: Do you use the same kit live and in the studio?

Vinnie: No. I use smaller drums in the studio. Smaller drums record better and always sound bigger in the studio for some reason. I don't know why, but a 14" floor tom sounds bigger than an 18" when it's recorded. I use 12", 13", and 14" toms, my usual snare, and 16x22 kick drums. I tune the drums low. If you tune drums too high you have to do something to control the ring, and that can take the life out of the sound.

MD: But you use larger drums live. Is that because you're a big guy and you play hard?

Vinnie: I'm not that big, not like I used to be. I always liked larger drums. They sound good on stage and they look good. They have excellent attack.

MD: Is it easy to get a good sound with bigger drums?

Vinnie: It's pretty easy to get a good drum sound out of almost any drum these days. All of the companies are really good. But I've stuck with Pearl because they make great stuff and they've been really good to me. Plus I have a soft spot for them. I remember the first time I saw Peter Criss with KISS. I thought to myself, "If Pearl is good enough for KISS, then those are the drums for me."

MD: And you use Pearl pedals as well.

Vinnie: The PowerShifters are the most flexible pedals out there, as far as adjustability. I keep mine tensioned pretty tight, and I use their big plastic beater with the flat surface to get the attack.

MD: That explains the hard smack you get on the bass drums.

Vinnie: There are also a couple of other key things to the attack: I use Danmar Super Rock pads on the bass drum heads. That gives you plastic impacting plastic, which creates a ton of attack. The pad is a little larger than a quarter.

On our older records, *Vulgar Display Of Power* in particular, I taped a silver dollar to the bass drum head where the beater makes contact. If you use a wooden or plastic beater and don't use an impact pad, your head is not going to last—and nobody likes changing their bass drum head.

MD: Your drumming always flows, and there's nothing mechanical about it. But since you're the guy who runs the band and also writes and records the songs, how does drumming remain a focus?

Vinnie: My approach to drumming is, I want to put enough on there to keep it interesting for drummers. But I don't want to play so much that it gets in the way of the groove or goes over the heads of the average listener. I pick my spots in songs where the drums can shine, but everywhere else I like to drive the train.

MD: Early on, who inspired your double bass playing?

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Vinnie: I come from the Tommy Aldridge school. The first time I heard him on the Pat Travers live record [*Live! Go For What You Know*], I just flipped. I loved his double bass work on that one. Tommy was doing stuff with his feet that most drummers couldn't do with their hands. And a couple of years after that, when he joined Ozzy's band, it was all over for me. Great stuff.

"PANTERA SHOULD NEVER HAVE ENDED. WE CONSIDERED OURSELVES THE ROLLING STONES OF HEAVY METAL. BUT SOMETIMES BAD THINGS HAPPEN THAT TURN OUT TO BE GOOD."

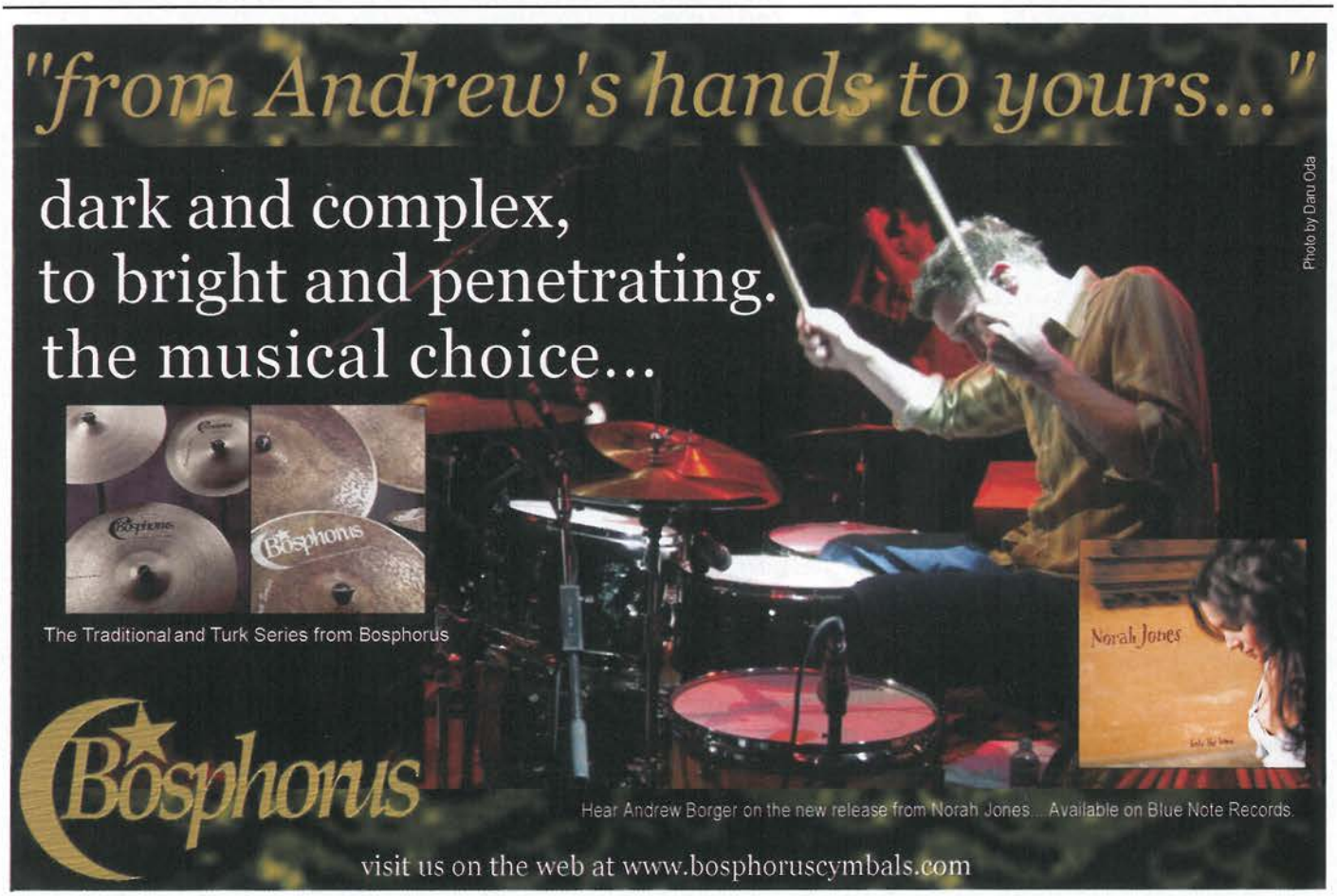
Tommy was definitely one of my main inspirations for my double kick playing. He did an educational video years ago, which I really learned a lot from. I followed his approach, leading with the left foot on the downbeats.

MD: Do you still lead with your left?

Vinnie: Yes, for the most part. A lot of young drummers try to start with the right foot, but it's awkward. Most drummers keep time with their left foot on the hi-hat, so moving it over to the second bass drum and leading with it just makes sense.

To build up my speed and endurance, I practiced at slow tempos to develop control, and then I gradually worked up my speed. I worked on double kick every day, and over time I could take it a little faster and my endurance improved.

Later on I got into playing double strokes on the right foot in between left single strokes. That's really where most of my tricky stuff comes from. I "bounce" that right pedal, like on the song "Becoming" [from *Far Beyond Driven*]. I know that some guys are now playing doubles with



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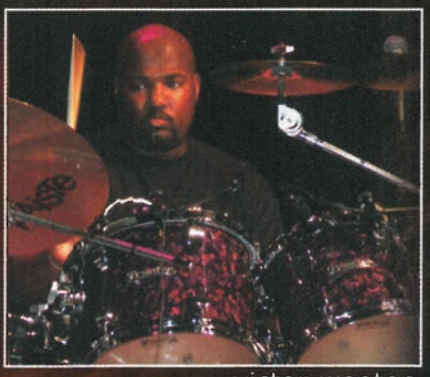

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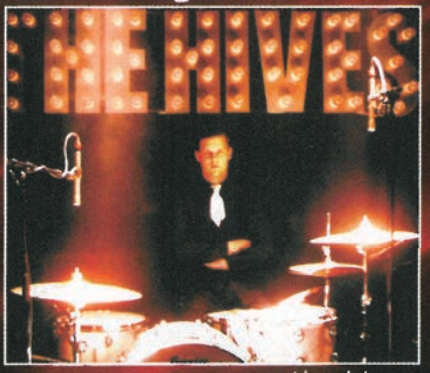

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both feet, but I don't do that.

I love double bass. If used properly, it can make songs steamroll. That said, I think a lot of metal players today tend to overuse it. If you hear double bass all of the time in the music, it doesn't have much of an impact. But if you use it at just the right time, you can really give a song a push.

MD: There are songs on *New Found Power* where you're playing simultaneous 16th notes on the snare and bass drums.

Vinnie: For that to feel right, I started with my right foot, matching the sticking of my hands. That felt more natural to me. I liked that part. I think it was a good way to do a crescendo. I started with the snare, brought the bass drums in, and built it.

MD: How high do you sit?

Vinnie: I don't sit too low or too high—maybe just a little low. I've sat down on some other guy's kits, where the seat was so high that it felt weird. It has a lot to do with each drummer's physical makeup. A guy like Tommy Lee, who has long arms, isn't going to feel comfortable sitting behind my kit. I've sat behind Tommy's drums before and it's like, "Wow, how do you reach the stuff? It's so far away!"

Speaking of sitting at the drums, one thing that's *very* important is keeping your back straight. I always tell Cat to let me know if he sees me hunching over. I don't want to have any back problems. I see a lot of drummers hunching over when they play, and that will lead to trouble down the road.

MD: I understand that you've had some physical problems.

Vinnie: I have gout. That's where your body can't get rid of uric acid fast enough and it deposits in the joint of your big toe. Then it crystallizes and the joint swells, so you can't walk. This first happened to me when we were making *Reinventing The Steel*. I'd been wrestling the night before and thought I'd broken my toe. At the hospital, they asked me if I drank dark whiskey and ate red meat, which I do, and at that point they told me that I have gout. It freaked me out. It lasted for five weeks, and then it switched feet. I went to five doctors, and finally the guy with the Texas Rangers told me to improve my diet, switch to clear alcohol, and take medicine. Eventually it did get better.

MD: And none of this has affected your drumming?

Vinnie: Nah. I worked around it. I've played through pain plenty of times. As a musician, you're like a pro athlete in a game. You have to finish it out.

MD: What Pantera tracks feature your best drumming?

Vinnie: "Primal Concrete Sledge," from *Cowboys From Hell,* is one of the coolest songs I've done. "Becoming," off of *Far Beyond Driven,* has some tricky footwork. But with each record there are songs that would never have come about if not for a unique drum pattern. On the new record, "New Found Power" is the one. I was playing that groove and Dimebag flipped out.

MD: You're known for your intense playing style, but on tracks like "Crawl" and "Moment Of Truth," you're playing very sparse, slow grooves. What's the

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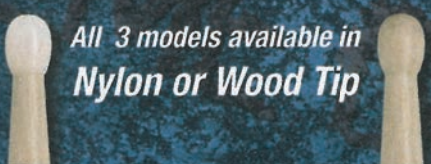

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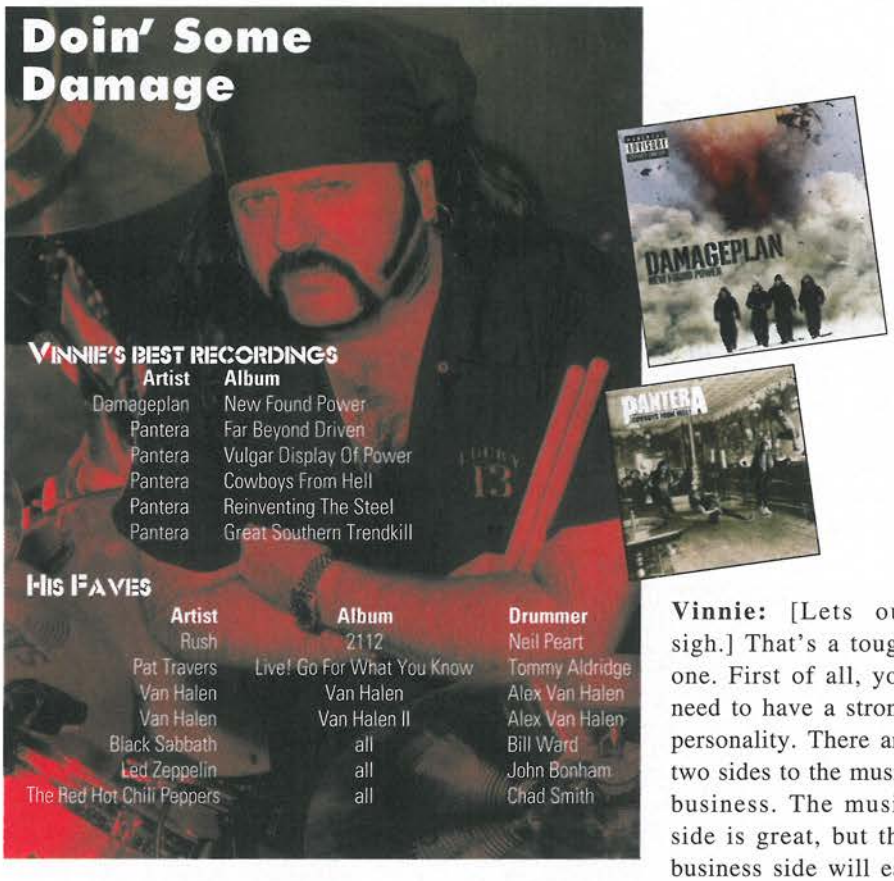


key to creating that kind of pocket?

Vinnie: To record this sort of thing, I like to create a nice vibe in the studio. Turn off the white lights, turn on the green ones, light a candle, and just think, Black Sabbath. As for the groove, I was thinking slow and sludgy. I've always been an intense player, especially on stage, and I usually play a bit on top of the beat. So those slower feels can be a challenge.

MD: You have a great command of the drums. You have power and speed, but it all boils down to your command. What's the secret?

Vinnie: It comes from having confidence and from playing live. I've been playing in this band since 1983. You can play in your room all day and all night, but playing live is irreplaceable. When you're in front of an audience, the lights are up, there's smoke in the house, and your adrenaline is on ten, experience is the only thing that will keep you from choking. You have to be able to say, "Been there, done that. I know what to do."

MD: You're one of only a handful of drummer-leaders. How can drummer-leaders get the respect they deserve?

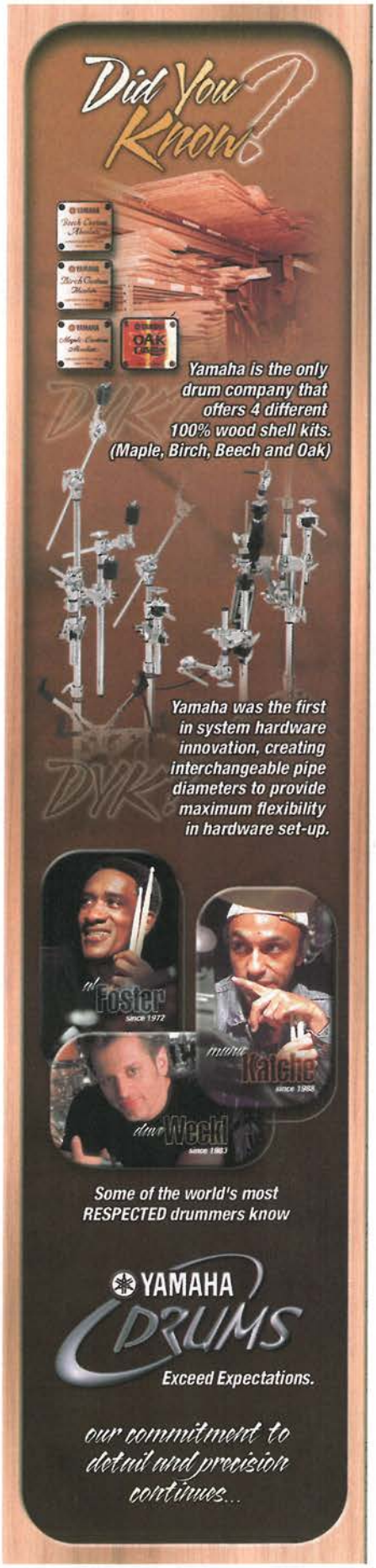
Vinnie: [Lets out sigh.] That's a tough one. First of all, you need to have a strong personality. There are two sides to the music business. The music side is great, but the business side will eat you alive if you don't pay attention to it. Some bands get on the steamroller and have success, but when it stops, they're broke. I felt it was my job to keep up with the finances, the interviews, and all of that stuff. Somebody has to be in charge.

MD: How many records has Pantera sold?

Vinnie: Over thirteen million. That's pretty kick-ass for no radio airplay or MTV support. It's unheard of.

MD: Are there any concerns that, without the Pantera name, Damageplan won't be a success?

Vinnie: Our goal is to move forward. Pantera should never have ended. We considered ourselves the Rolling Stones of heavy metal. We created this army of fans that was so loyal. Unfortunately, Phil walked away. But sometimes bad things happen that turn out to be good. That's how we feel about Damageplan. I think we're going to give our old fans something they'll be into, and hopefully we'll pick up from where we left off.



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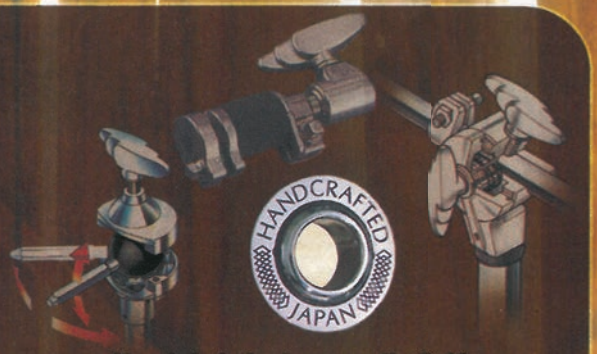

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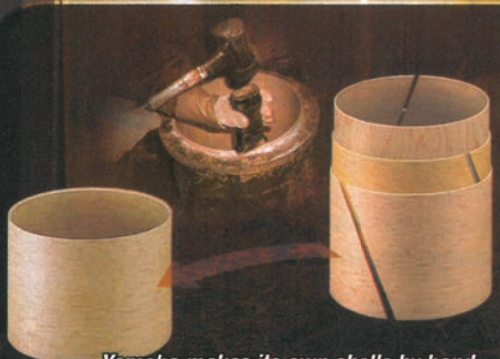

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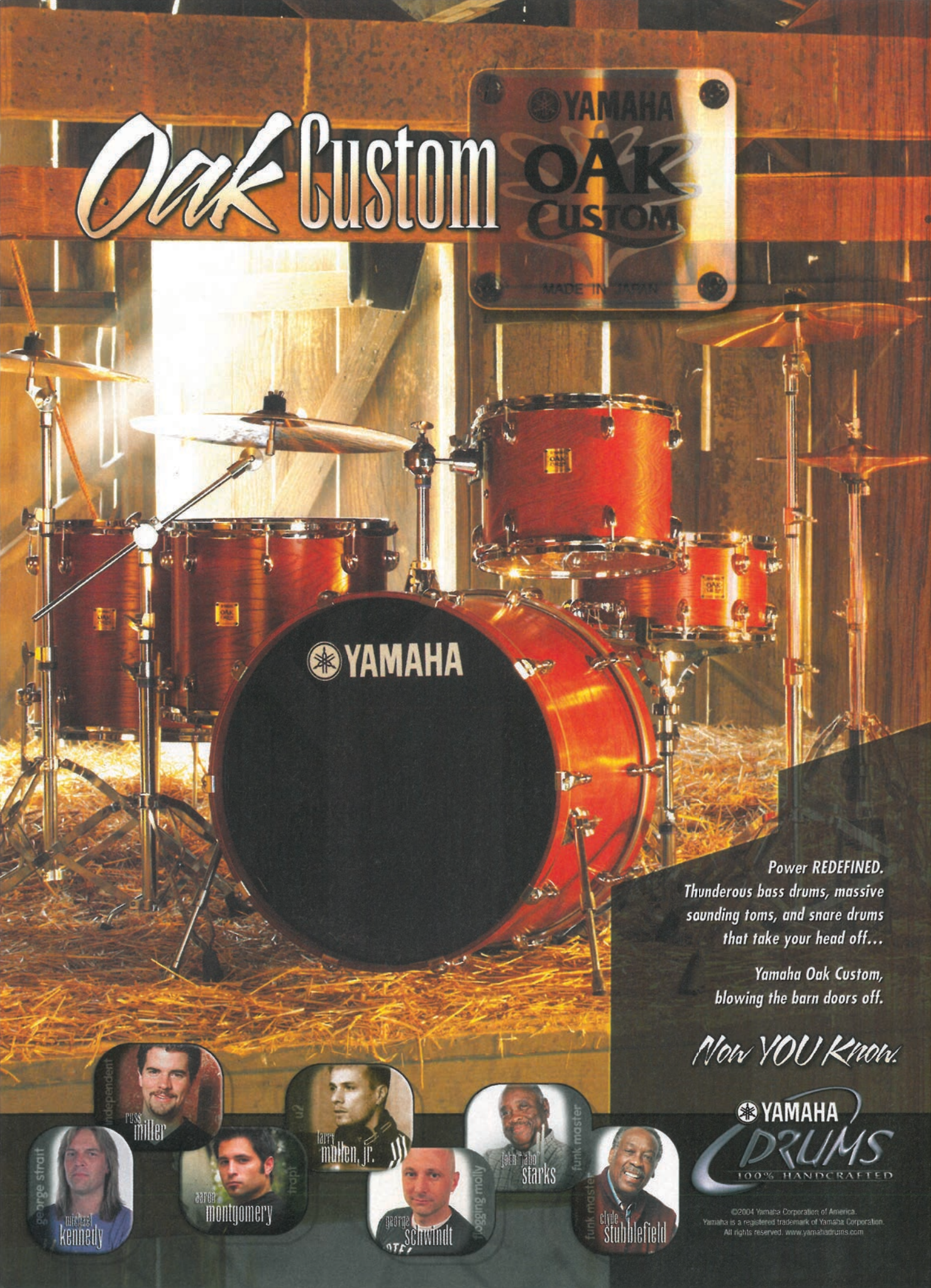

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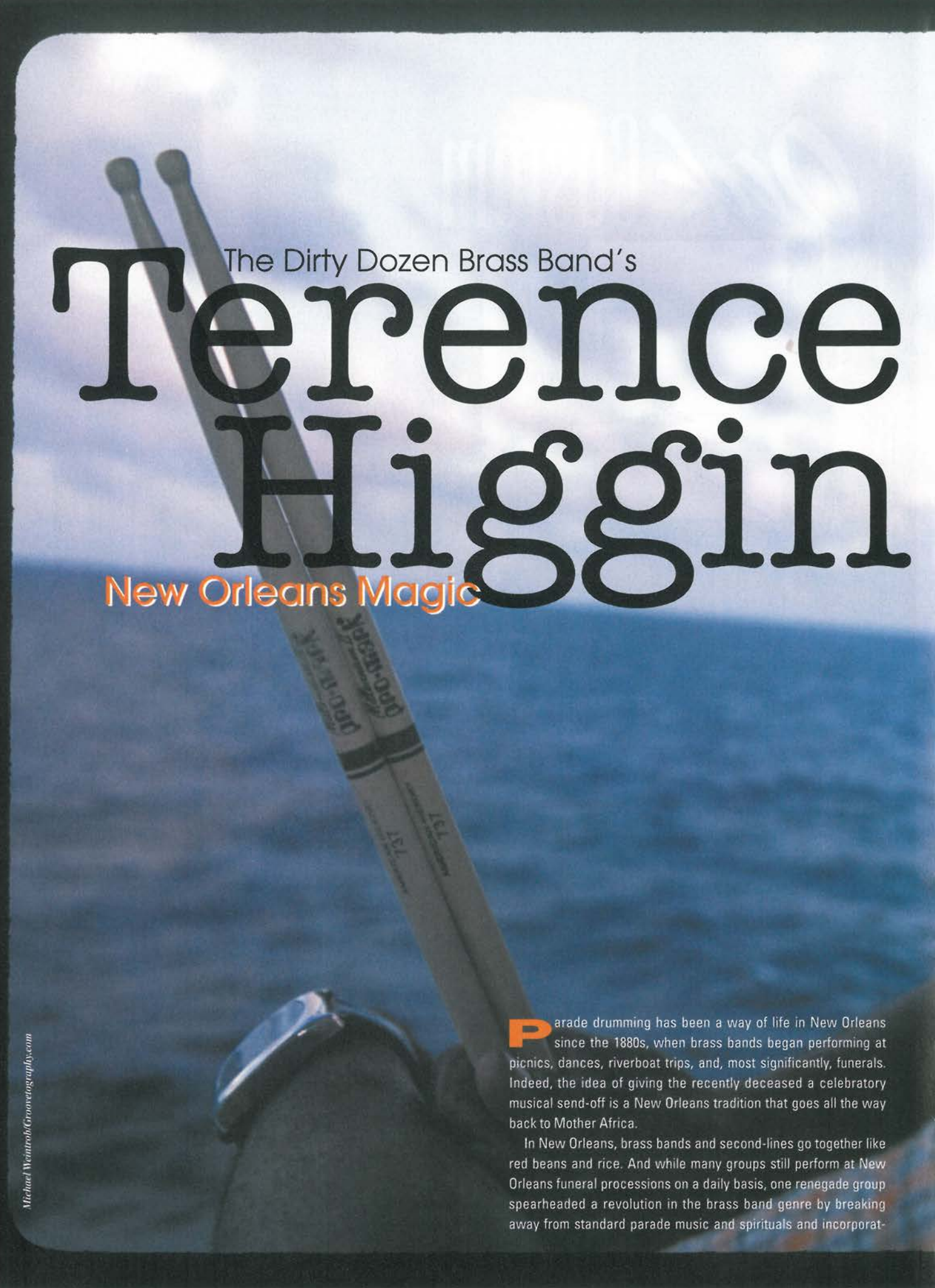


The Dirty Dozen Brass Band's

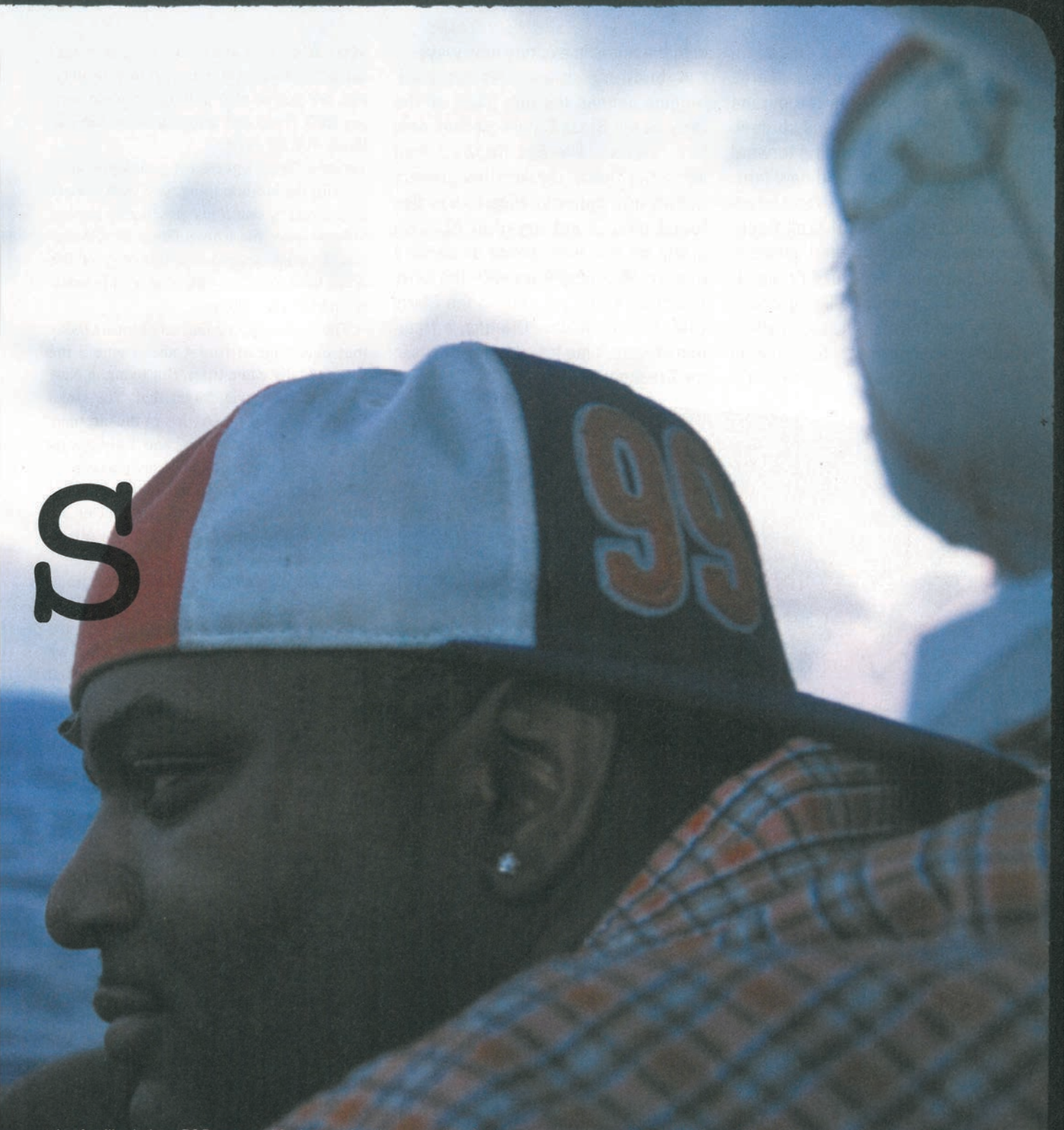
Terence Higgin

New Orleans Magic

Michael Weintrob/Gravetography.com

Parade drumming has been a way of life in New Orleans since the 1880s, when brass bands began performing at picnics, dances, riverboat trips, and, most significantly, funerals. Indeed, the idea of giving the recently deceased a celebratory musical send-off is a New Orleans tradition that goes all the way back to Mother Africa.

In New Orleans, brass bands and second-lines go together like red beans and rice. And while many groups still perform at New Orleans funeral processions on a daily basis, one renegade group spearheaded a revolution in the brass band genre by breaking away from standard parade music and spirituals and incorporat-



ing familiar bebop, R&B, pop, and funk tunes into its repertoire. As writer Lee Hildebrand of the *San Francisco Chronicle* noted, "New Orleans funeral music had changed little since the days of King Oliver and Louis Armstrong until The Dirty Dozen Brass Band entered the picture."

From its inception in 1977, the group has grown from a Crescent City cult phenomenon to an international sensation, touring nearly constantly in the US and in over thirty other countries on five continents. Over the years The Dirty Dozen Brass Band has also been featured on albums by such pop artists as David Bowie, Elvis Costello, Dr. John, and The Black Crowes. Last year, the group shared the stage with Widespread Panic at a gala Halloween concert at Madison Square Garden, opening the door for The Dozen to infiltrate the burgeoning jam-band scene.

New Orleans monster drummer Terence Higgins has been the driving force behind The Dirty Dozen Brass Band for the past eight years. Hailing from Algiers on the West Bank (just across the Mississippi river from downtown New Orleans and the French Quarter), the thirty-three-year-old Higgins apprenticed with two important New Orleans musical figures—Meters bassist George Porter and legendary pianist and pop icon Fats Domino.

Story by Bill Milkowski

Since joining The Dozen in 1995, Higgins has endeavored to keep one foot firmly in the parade drumming tradition that runs so deep in New Orleans while striding forward with the other foot into bold new territory for brass bands. Aside from incorporating some powerful funk backbeats and a touch of hip-hop aesthetic into the fabric of The Dozen's signature shuffles and second-line grooves, he's also pushing the envelope with a MIDI trigger setup that allows him to create rhythmic loops and interact with the horns in exciting new ways.

A budding songwriter as well, Higgins penned the title track of The Dirty Dozen Brass Band's smokin' new live release, *We Got Robbed*. And while the Dozen remains his primary activity as a drummer, Higgins has also found time to put together his own group on the side known as Swamp Grease. We caught up with the Dirty Dozen drummer just prior to the Mardi Gras season in New Orleans, a traditionally busy time for all brass bands in the Crescent City.

Jenny Bogert

MD: It's clear that you've got a real authentic street beat going on in your playing, but you're also putting up some serious funk beats and bringing some hip-hop flavor into the band.

Terence: Yeah, I guess my generation grew up with the hip-hop thing, so I'm definitely influenced by that. Plus growing up in New Orleans gave me a foundation as a drummer. I mean, second-line is a way of life down here. We deal with it on a daily basis. It's part of the culture.

There's so much going on in music today that cats tend to forget about where the stuff actually came from. But living in New Orleans, you never forget that. The street beat is alive down here. It's in the air, man. I grew up with that stuff and I always go back to it as a foundation of my playing.

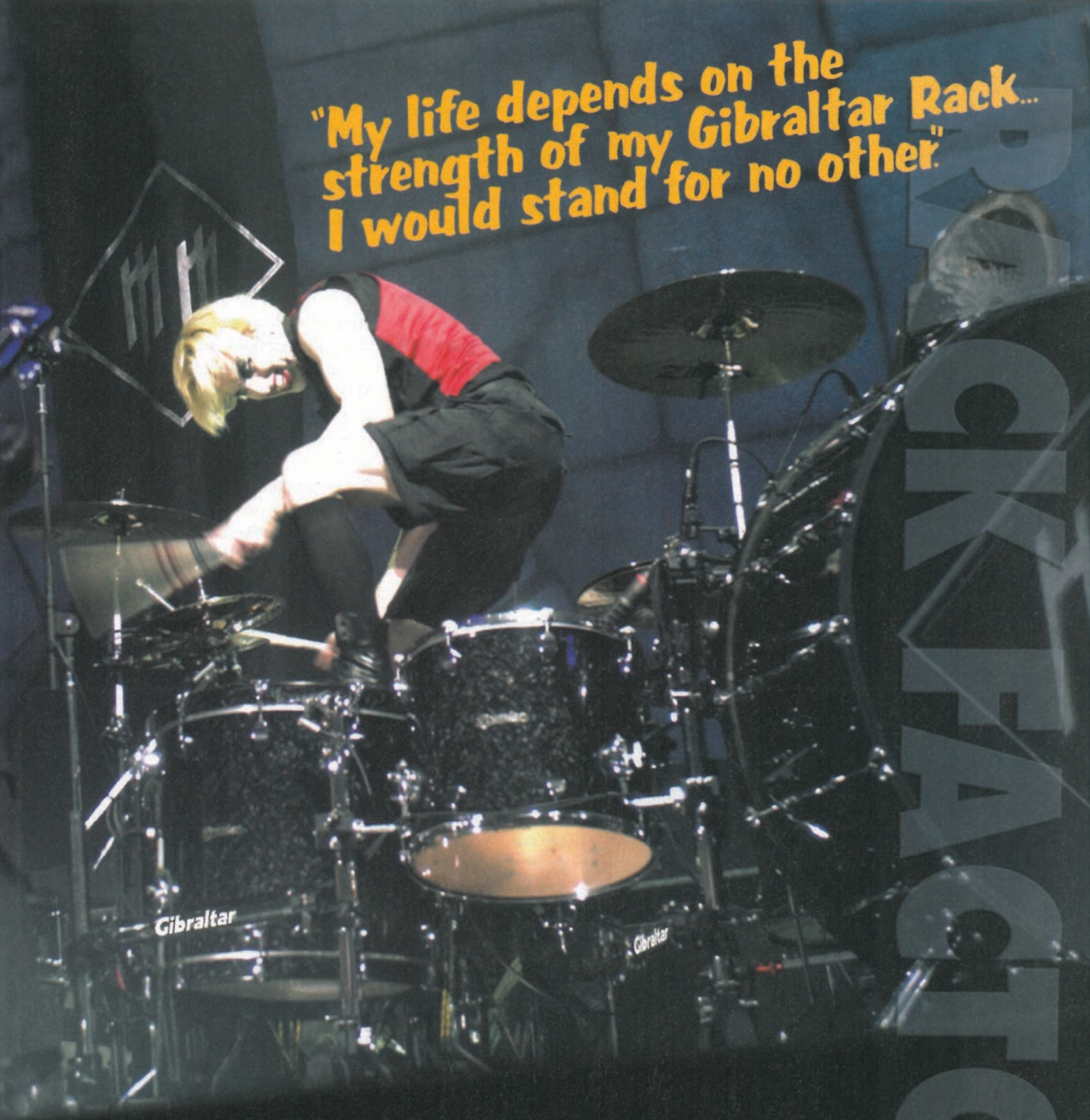
MD: And it goes beyond technique. It's also about the spicy food, the feel of the paddleboats on the Mississippi, the relentless humidity in August....

Terence: *Everything*, man. It's the crawfish, the gumbo, and the way people walk and talk down here. It's embedded in the fabric of New Orleans life. I mean, we have a second-line for all kinds of social occasions. It doesn't just have to be a funeral procession. They have a second-line every Sunday in the French Quarter. So this music is just a part of life in New Orleans.

A lot of cats move to New Orleans and try to cop this vibe, and if you're here for a couple of years you might get it a little bit. But I was a kid playing second-line when I didn't even know what it was. Just hearing that all the time as a kid, it becomes a part of you.

Second-line music is not textbook-friendly or video-friendly. You can learn the basic technique, but you have to know where the stuff comes from. And I'm just beginning to realize the legacy of New Orleans drumming. I don't

"I'M DEFINITELY INFLUENCED BY HIP-HOP. BUT GROWING UP IN NEW ORLEANS GAVE ME A FOUNDATION. I MEAN, SECOND-LINE IS A WAY OF LIFE DOWN HERE."



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think I fully embraced it at first, but once I did I started to have a greater appreciation for the whole rich history of the great drummers that came before us—Baby Dodds, Zutty Singleton, James Black, Freddy Coleman, Hunger Williams, Leo Morris, and all those great cats. I hope to make my own little mark some day.

MD: What are your earliest memories of feeling New Orleans street beats?

Terence: I remember early on, when I was just a little kid, attending the Mardi Gras Indian rehearsals on the West Bank at an old laundromat that was around the corner from my house. My uncles would come by and pick me up: "Yeah, we're going to Indian practice. Come on along!" So we'd go over there and beat on old water bottles or whatever, just to join in with that Indian beat. That whole experience really got me turned on to the flavor of New Orleans.

MD: And kids can really pick up rhythms easily from an early age.

Terence: Oh yeah! I started when I was three or four. I remember my great grandfather gave me a set of bongos. He was from Belize, so I have a little Caribbean ancestry. But that really started me playing drums. I used to jam on those bongos all day long. And before I had a kit I would drum on paint cans, boxes, and whatever I could get my hands on. I actually built a kind of makeshift drumkit out of all that stuff.

MD: I'm sure you did a lot of playing just for fun as a kid, but at what point did you start getting involved with studying drums and percussion?

Terence: I started out in fourth grade with the school band. My background was with marching bands in grade school. My main instrument was snare drum, but I also played bass drum or whatever they needed. And from that marching band experience I was able to develop a nice press roll. That was the first rudiment I learned, and it's been a foundation for so much of what I still do today.

I started getting into the drumset in junior high. My grandmother bought my first set of drums from Mr. Freddy Coleman, who was a great New Orleans drummer. I'll never forget, I went over to his house and he had this blue sparkle Ludwig kit. He set me on the drums and told me to play a roll, which I did. And then he said to me, "Yeah, you deserve these drums." I've been a student of drumming ever since.

I had a few private teachers, but my basic learning experiences came from drummers I knew and grew up with in Algiers. A bunch of us would get together, set up kits, jam, and exchange ideas. That's a big thing in New Orleans. A lot of the old-school drummers like Smokey Johnson and James Black used to do that. That's a big part of learning. It ain't all about the textbook all the time, especially in New Orleans music.

MD: That idea of drummers playing together and trading information goes back to the time of slaves drumming in Congo Square in New Orleans, and ultimately even further back to the drum choirs of West Africa.

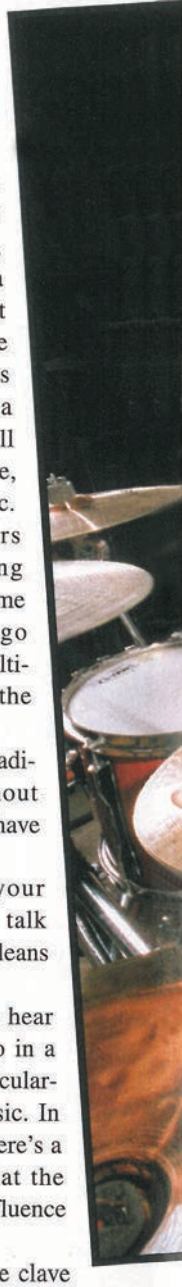
Terence: Totally. It's a deep tradition. Drummers, man...without rhythm there is no music. You have to look back to the drums.

MD: You mentioned your Caribbean ancestry. Can you talk about that influence on New Orleans music?

Terence: Absolutely. You can hear bits of the rhumba and mambo in a lot of New Orleans music, particularly in Professor Longhair's music. In the music of the second-line, there's a mambo bass drum pattern that the cats play. So there's a direct influence from the Caribbean.

I'm actually incorporating the clave

Jenny Bagert



DOWN AND DIRTY

HIGGINS' BEST RECORDINGS

Artist	Album
The Dirty Dozen Brass Band	We Got Robbed—Live In New Orleans
The Dirty Dozen Brass Band	Buck Jump
The Dirty Dozen Brass Band	Down And Dirty (DVD)
Michael Ward	Make A Wish
Michael Ward	Continuum
The Dirty Dozen Brass Band	Medicated Magic
The Dirty Dozen Brass Band	Ears To The Wall

HIS FAVORITES

Artist	*Album*	Drummer
John Scofield	Groove Elation	Idris Muhammad
The Meters	Look-Ka Py Py	Joseph "Zigaboo" Modeliste
Treme Brass Band	Gimme My Money Back	Benny Jones, Lionel Batiste
Dave Holland	Extensions	Marvin "Smitty" Smith
Nicholas Payton	Nick@Night	Adonis Rose
Harry Connick Jr.	She	Raymond Weber, David R. Batiste, Joseph "Zigaboo" Modeliste
Chuck Brown	Put Your Hands Up (DVD)	various
Wynton Marsalis	Black Codes	Jeff "Tain" Watts

Jenny Bagert

with second-line, which is easy to do because they're related. In second-line the snare drum pattern is based on a 3/2 clave. Again, that's where the Caribbean or Latin influence comes in. So it's easy to draw the connection between clave and second-line because it's all the same feel.

You can hear that on the title track of *We Got Robbed*. It's basically a Latin influence, but it's really my interpretation of a modern second-line beat. There's also an undercurrent of Afro-Beat in there. I've always dug Fela Kuti. We've actually started incorporating that Afro-Beat flavor into some of the other Dozen tunes that originally had second-line beats. Again, it's all related and all goes back to Africa.

MD: What were some of your early gigging experiences around New Orleans?

Terence: I didn't do much gigging until I got to college, where I was introduced to this cat I ended up playing with for a long time, a jazz violinist named Michael Ward. In high school I used to listen to a lot of jazz-fusion, especially Jean-Luc Ponty. His drummer, Rayford Griffin, was one of my favorites at the time. I also dug Billy Cobham, Lenny White, and all the fusion cats.

Through absorbing so much Ponty music, I was able to make an immediate connection with Mike Ward when I met him at Southern University. I ended up playing with him for eight years at dives and hole-in-the-wall joints, just shedding and getting my act together. But it wasn't until I met [Meters bassist] George Porter in 1994 and began playing in his Runnin' Partners band that I really started getting into the real New Orleans scene. George introduced me to the vast repertoire of old-school New Orleans tunes, and he introduced me to a number of New Orleans music legends, like R&B singer Johnny Adams and guitarists Snooks Eaglin and Earl King, cats I never *dreamed* I'd play with.

MD: How did you get that gig with Porter?

Terence: Right before I got the gig with George I was playing in a power trio called Funkhouse. We were trying to generate some hype and get a record deal; we even had a development deal going with EMI. George came to see one of our gigs at Tipitina's [famed New Orleans club] and heard me play. He was looking for a drummer at the time, and after the gig he asked me to come by his house the next day for an audition.

I went over to George's house, and the first thing he said to me when I got on the drums was, "Play a shuffle." So I played a shuffle, and then I played a couple of others, and he said, "Man, you got the gig." He then gave me ten cassette tapes of all his tunes and said, "We leave in a day. Can you make the tour?"

I ended up playing in George's band for about a year, and it was a blessing for me. I really learned the history from this cat. I was nervous at first on the gig, but the band swung from the first day and we got even tighter over time.

MD: And following that stint with Porter, you joined The Dirty Dozen.

Terence: Exactly. But I have to admit, before I joined The Dozen, I wasn't really into them. I was more into fusion, jazz, and funk, and they weren't really doing that. They were doing their thing. But at some point Roger Lewis, the leader of the band, came to me and said, "Man, we want you to audition." I was playing with George at the time, which was my main gig, and doing some other things with Michelle Shocked. So I didn't know if I wanted to take the gig with The Dozen.

I was kind of apprehensive about going out with a brass band because I couldn't see myself functioning in that setting. But when you think about brass bands, actually, the drumkit itself evolved from that whole thing. It just went down from two drummers playing snare and bass drum separately to one drummer doing both parts.

Back in the early days, Baby Dodds, Zutty Singleton, and all those cats were basically incorporating the function of two different drummers onto the kit and dealing with independence. So I thought about it and started checking out The Dozen's music. I began to see the potential. So I did the audition, waited it out, and then they called with an itinerary and the pay, and I was like, "Okay. I'm in!" They had so many dates booked, and that really sold me.

MD: Was that the first time they employed a full drumkit in the band?

Terence: No. Raymond Weber played on a couple of Dirty Dozen records before I got into the band. So they'd been trying to make that move to the kit. They'd been around for so long doing what they do with a marching snare and bass drummer that it was time for them to move on. Plus, they weren't really

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Terence Higgins

doing parades anymore. They always wanted to be a band and get into doing big concerts, which is something we're definitely doing now.

MD: What was the first Dirty Dozen record that you played on?

Terence: That was *Ears To The Wall*, which came out on Mammoth Records in 1996. They actually dropped the brass band name at that time and just called themselves The Dirty Dozen. The music was kind of smooth-jazzish compared to their previous records, but it still had a New Orleans twist to it. But *Ears* is actually one of my favorite records we've done.

MD: And then in 1999 came *Buck Jump*, the highly regarded Dirty Dozen record produced by John Medeski of Medeski, Martin & Wood.

Terence: That was a *trip*, man. When we did *Ears To The Wall,* there was a lot of preparation that went into it, because at that time the band was doing a lot of rehearsing with the new configuration and drumset. But when *Buck Jump* came along, we'd been touring so hard it was like, "Dude, do we even have time to work on new material?"

John Medeski came in and decided to

Jenny Bagert

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capture the orginal vibe of The Dozen, which was an "anything goes" attitude. Medeski had a "roll tape" mentality through the whole session. Everything that was going on in the studio was recorded. And it was great because he captured the essence of The Dozen, which had been lost a little bit on previous records.

MD: Then in 2002 came *Medicated Magic*, the group's debut on Rope-A-Dope Records, which featured a number of special guests.

Terence: That record was kind of a throw-

TERENCE'S KIT

Drums: Pearl MLX series in Liquid Amber finish

A. 4x10 snare
B. 6½x14 Sensitone snare (steel)
C. 11x12 tom
D. 8x8 tom
E. 8x10 tom
F. 14x16 tom (mounted)
G. 18x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Paiste

1. 16" Sound Formula China
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4. 15" Signature crash
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6. 22" Traditional medium-light ride
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8. 16" Signature crash (with 4" cup chime on top)
9. 14" Signature crash with 12" Sound Formula China resting on top

Hardware: Pearl, including an Eliminator double bass pedal (medium spring tension), Gibraltar rack, LP cowbell mounted on Gajate bracket

Heads: Evans Genera Dry on snare batter, Remo Ambassador snare-side, Evans coated G1s on tom batters, Remo Ambassadors on bottoms, Aquarian Superkick II on bass drum batter, Pearl logo head on front (minimal muffling in bass drum)

Sticks: Pro-Mark 737 model (hickory with wood tip)

Microphones: Audix D-2 (snare and toms), D-4 (floor tom), D-6 (bass drum), CX-111 (overheads)

Higgins On His Electronics

Terence has been incorporating some modern technology into the Dirty Dozen in the form of an Akai MPC 2000 sampler, Electrix Repeater and Filter Factory effects, a Zinn Drum MIDI controller, Pole Pad triggers, and a Boomerang unit that he uses on stage to create live loops. According to the drummer, "It allows me to come out from behind the drums, walk up to the front of the stage, and start tapping out grooves on a trigger pad to create a loop. Then while the loop is going, I can get into some interplay with the horns or do little hip-hop things on the drums."

Jenny Baguet

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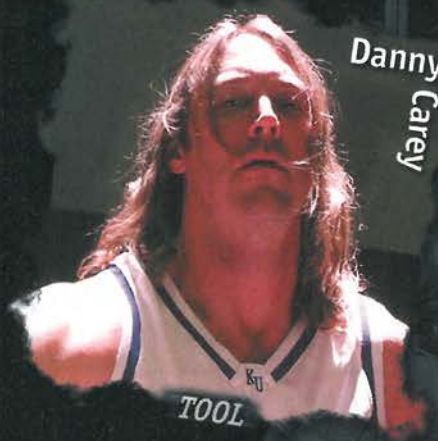

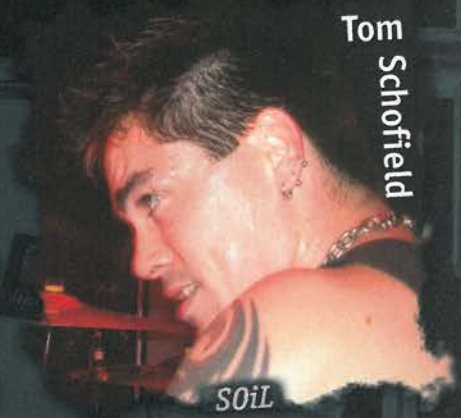

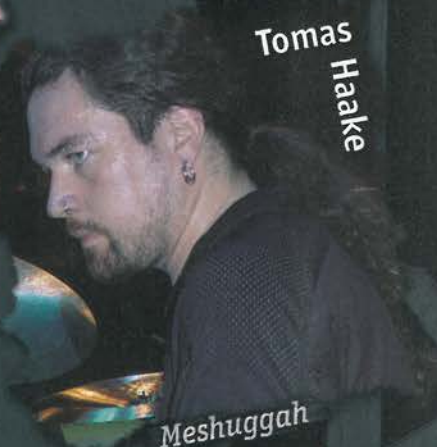

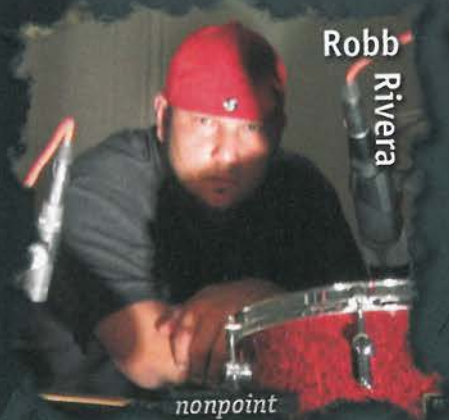

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back. It was the band's 25th anniversary, and we wanted to do a special New Orleans–inspired record. Plus we didn't do a lot of writing that year, so we decided to do a few classic cover tunes, like The Meters' "Cissy Strut" and "Africa," Dr. John's "Junko Partner" and "Walk On Gilded Splinters," and Professor Longhair's "Big Chief." So that record worked out good. We had a bunch of guests, like pedal steel player Robert Randolph, DJ Logic, Dr. John, Olu Dara, John Bell from Widespread Panic, and Norah Jones, who sang on "Ruler Of My Heart." Norah surprised me, because at that point nobody knew who she was. But then the next year she was larger than life.

MD: On *Medicated Magic*, how did you approach Zigaboo Modeliste's concept on those famous Meters tunes, "Cissy Strut" and "Africa"?

Terence: Well, Zig is Zig. Very few cats can emulate Zig to a "T." And I checked out a lot of Zig, especially from playing with George Porter. Those cats were like two peas in a pod in The Meters, and luckily I had a little bit of experience dealing with Zig's approach during the time I played with George. But I didn't really get too deep into it on *Medicated Magic* because I wanted to do my own thing. I was certainly influenced by Zig, but I didn't want to sound exactly like him.

MD: What records would you recommend for a young drummer who's interested in checking out New Orleans music and specifically the drum beats inherent in that music?

Terence: Zig is definitely one to check out, along with anything by the Preservation Hall Jazz Band. You get the essence of New Orleans drumming from those two styles—the trad-jazz thing, the second line, and the whole syncopated funk thing that Zig threw down. You'd also want to check out a lot of the brass band stuff. That's the oldest style of drumming in New Orleans music, and in investigating any style of music you want to go directly to the source. Also, I would recommend any records that James Black played on, as well as Herlin Riley and Earl Palmer. Earl really incorporated the second-line feel into all of the stuff he did with Fats Domino.

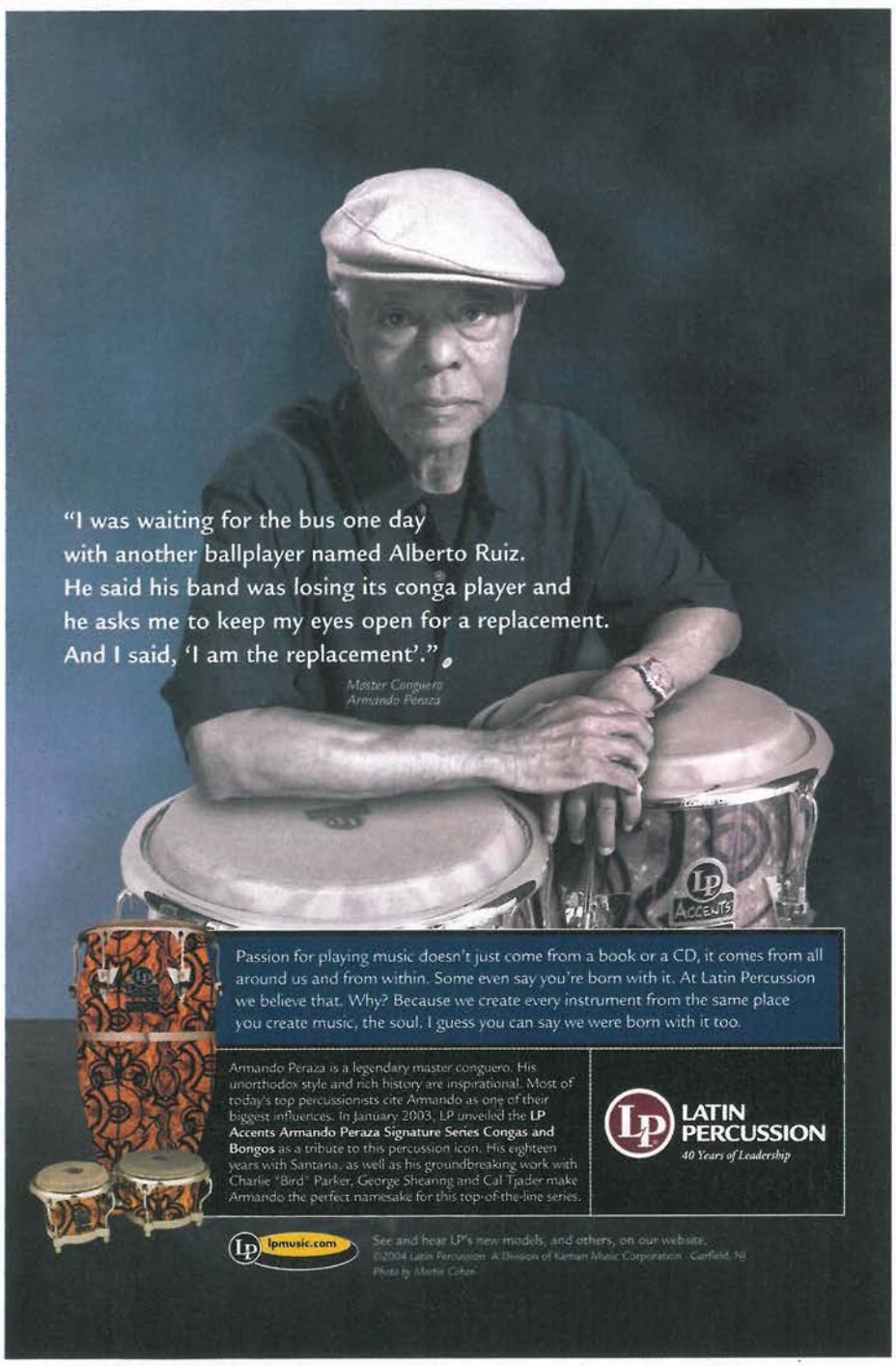
MD: You had some experience playing with Fats Domino yourself, didn't you?

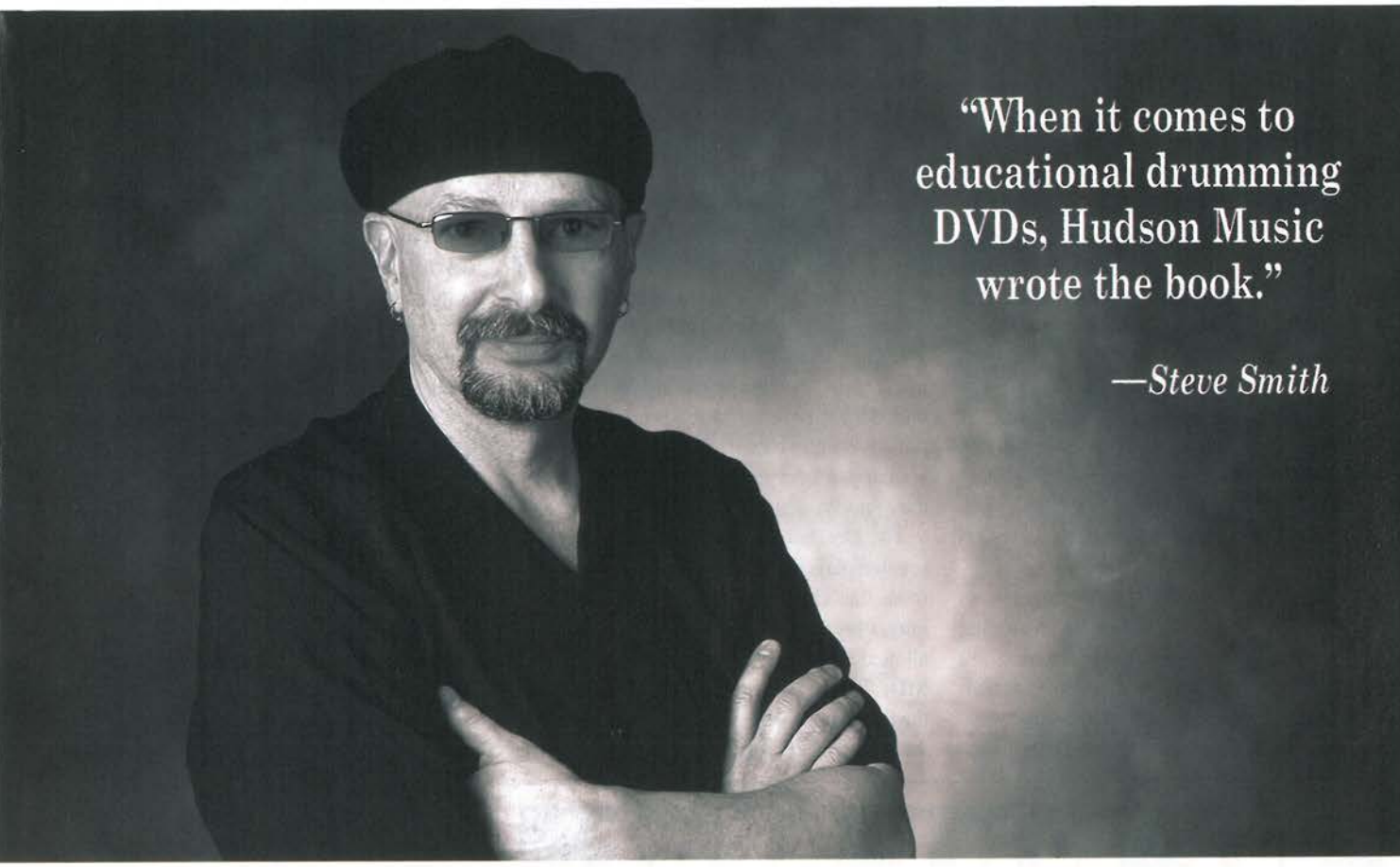
Terence: Oh man, that was a trip! The Dirty Dozen's Roger Lewis had been playing with Fats for years and got me on board. I remember going over to Fats' house in the Lower Ninth ward and thinking, "Man, this cat played with Earl Palmer, Smokey Johnson, and Cornelius Coleman—all these great drummers who introduced the New Orleans flavor to rock 'n' roll. So what am *I* doing here?"

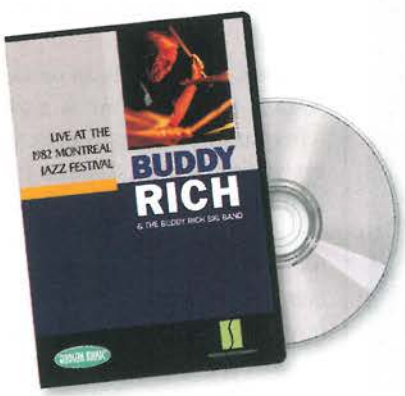
At first I felt like I was totally out of my league, but this is where doing your homework comes into play. You have to investigate the music on any gig that you're going to take and shed it relentlessly until you know it cold. That's what I did with Fats—and he's got a *ton* of tunes to learn.

The grooves that Fats plays may sound simple, but there's more to them than you might think. It's kind of like second-line, but there's another twist to it. There's always this in-between, playing-in-the-cracks kind of feel with him where it's kind of straight and yet not, kind of swung and yet not.

When you think of the drummers that







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Given that fact, it's not surprising that Steve's become an advocate of educational drumming DVDs, too. "DVDs have incredible sound and crystal clear images. But they're more than just the next best thing to seeing a drummer play live," comments Steve. "With DVD you have instant access to the words and music of some of the greatest players that ever lived. Plus, the bonus material that's included on today's DVD-ROMs— commentary tracks, alternate viewing angles, play-along loops, printable examples and exercises— can help any drummer advance their drumming faster and more easily than ever before."

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played with Fats, they were real jazz drummers who were basically paying the bills by playing rock 'n' roll. So that's what you got—a natural swing or triplet feel within a rock 'n' roll beat. That's also a natural thing for New Orleans drummers in general. We're all accustomed to playing that way. Our shuffles and swing grooves are always in between the cracks. It's not a straight 8th-note feel. That's the essence of New Orleans drumming.

MD: You mentioned earlier that when you auditioned for George Porter he asked you to play a shuffle. Can you differentiate between the different types of shuffles?

Terence: It's just a matter of where you lay in the beat and the kick drum pattern. Sometimes you can play straight quarter notes on the kick, you can play a shuffle with it, or you can even play intermittent beats with it.

I learned a cool shuffle from Herman Ernest. He's got this beat where he's swinging or shuffling on the ride cymbal, playing a 2 and 4 8th-note feel on the snare, and a syncopated pattern on the kick drum. In some ways it sounds a lot like stuff that Fats Domino has going on in his music. When I got the gig with George Porter, Herman turned me onto some things that opened up my shuffling a lot more. He's one of the great shuffle players.

MD: Last year you played a Halloween show at Madison Square Garden in New York with Widespread Panic, and the crowd really dug The Dirty Dozen. How does it feel to be tapping into this whole jam-band scene?

Terence: It's cool! It's part of the whole growth and evolution of The Dozen. The jam-band scene today is thriving, and New Orleans is definitely a part of it. And when you think about it, The Dirty Dozen has been a jam band since the beginning. We've always had the attitude of "anything goes" in the music. We rely on the magic on stage. It doesn't happen every night, but when we get in the moment, man, you can't duplicate it.

The Dozen is also so open-ended with the sets we play, and I love that about the band. I think that's why I've stuck with them for so long. Plus the amount of creative freedom I'm allotted is so great.

MD: That whole approach fits right in with the jam-band aesthetic.

Terence: That's totally the vibe. That's what the audience digs, watching this stuff evolve right before their eyes without any set plans. It's music that happens in the moment, and the kids are really in tune with it.

It's great to have fans that are so focused on what the band is doing, but at the same time they don't want to see the same show every night. That keeps us on our toes. We don't play the same show every night, and we don't have to because we've got such a vast repertoire. On any given night we might pull out tunes that we haven't played in three years, or we might pull out some brand new material. It keeps everything fresh.

MD: Given your busy road schedule with The Dirty Dozen, do you ever have time to pursue any side projects of your own?

Terence: Well, I'm working on a side project now. I've got a band called Swamp Grease that I put together. It's a concept that I've had for years, which is inspired by Billy Cobham and all of the great drummer/bandleaders. But with The Dozen touring so much, I never had time to pursue it until last year.

I didn't call all of the name cats for this project. I wanted musicians I'm comfortable playing with and who I've known for some time. And these are some young cats from New Orleans who nobody knows about but who play their butts off. I hope to have that record out in a couple of months and have it available on my Web site [www.swamp-grease.com].

MD: What's the musical direction of this project?

Terence: It's basically an outlet for my own writing. I want to grow as a songwriter and reflect more of my influences, which include everything from the Cobham fusion-oriented stuff to the Chuck Brown go-go thing to different takes on second-line grooves. I've been having fun learning how to do my own thing—making the record myself, producing it, co-engineering it with Mark Bingham, and just having a hands-on experience in the studio. This whole thing has really inspired me to want to record more and document my growth as a drummer and musician.

Meanwhile, I've been blessed to have the opportunity to play with The Dirty Dozen. It's some historical stuff. The band is like a national living treasure, so I'm proud to be a part of it. And they keep me working, man. I've been with them for eight years, and I'm *still* having fun.

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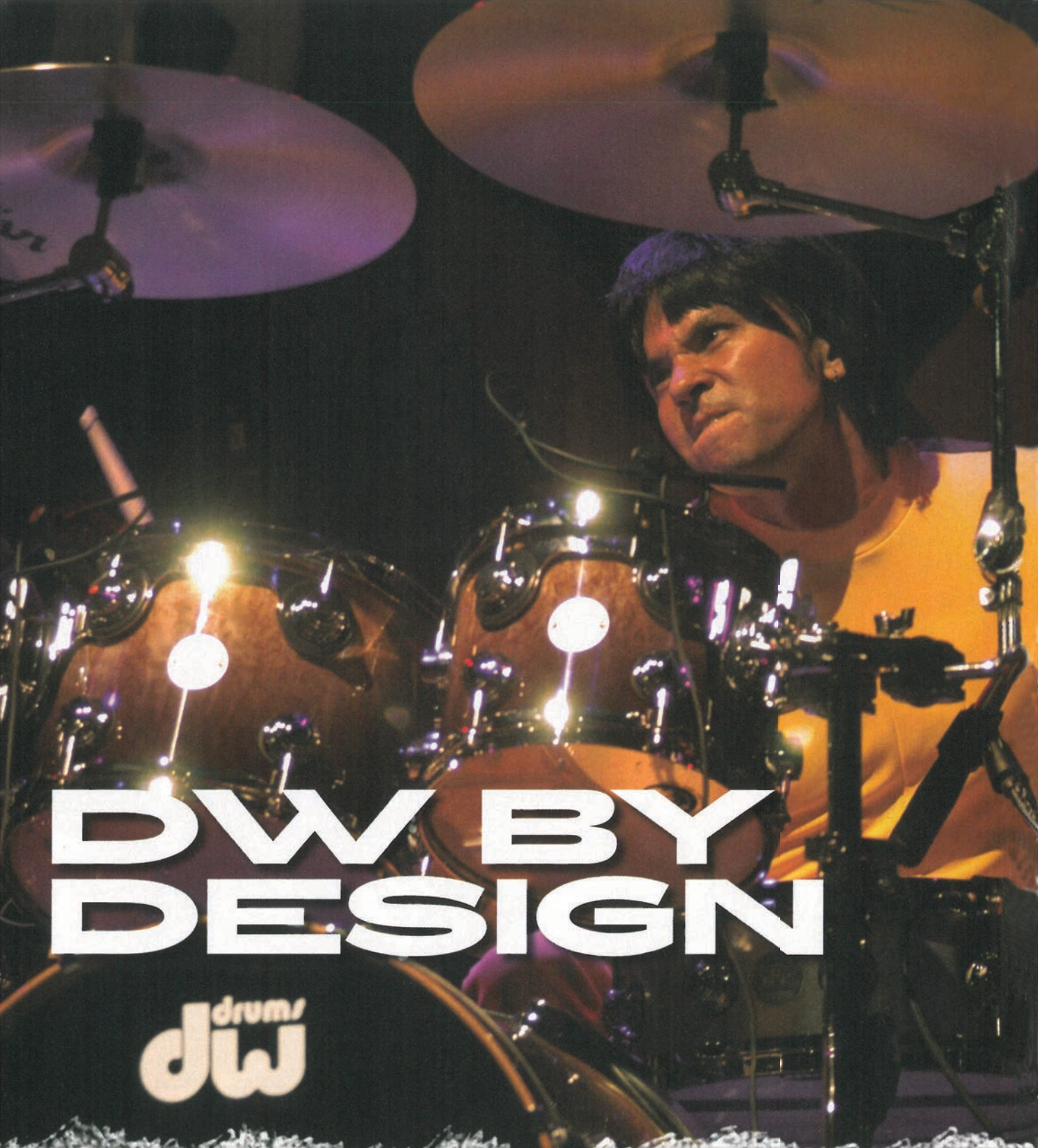

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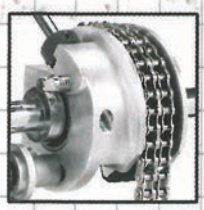

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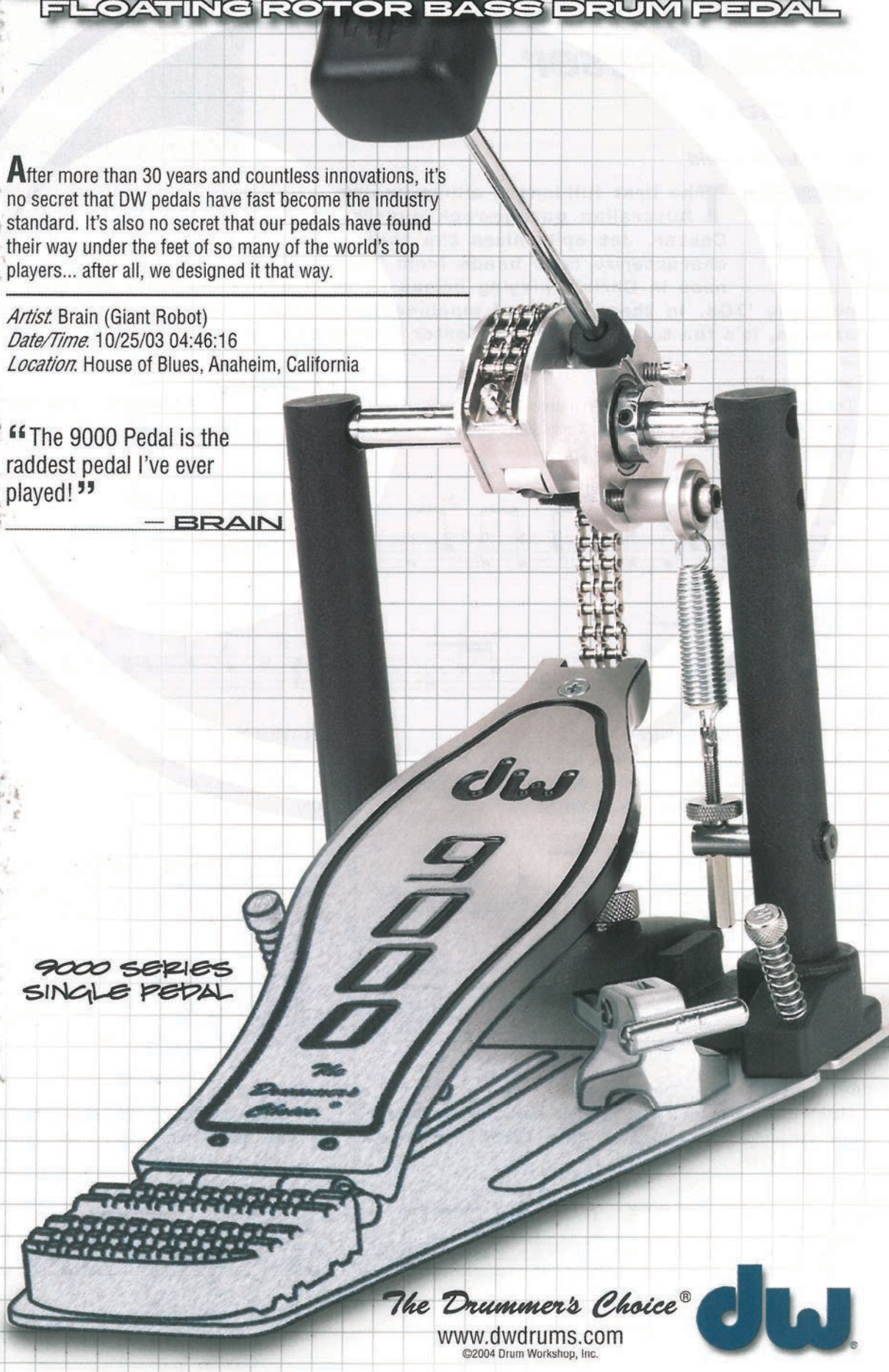

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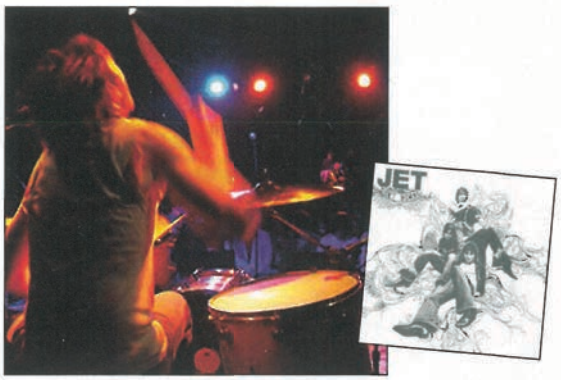
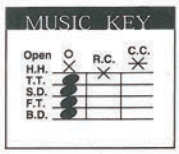


Jet's
Chris Cester
Get Born

by Ed Breckenfeld

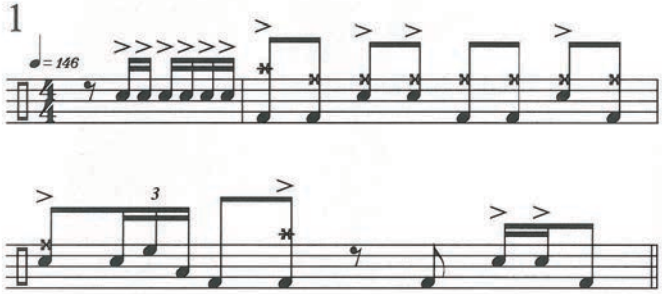


The first full-length album by Jet is making quite a splash for this Australian garage-rock quartet. Led by brothers Nic and Chris Cester, Jet epitomizes the toughness and swagger that seems to characterize rock bands from "down under." The energy and looseness in Chris's playing brings to mind drumming from the late '60s and early '70s. In these times of machine-like precision and complexity in drum patterns, it's fun to take a look at Cester's throwback grooves and rambling fills.

"Last Chance"

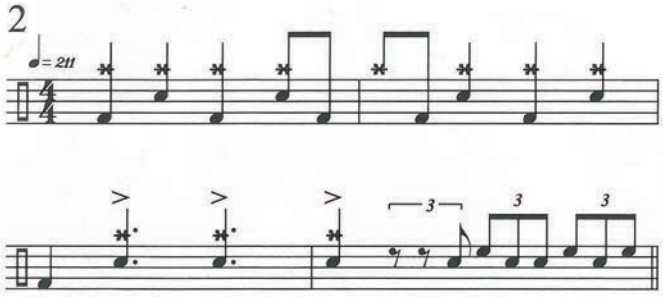
The album opener sets the tone with a great guitar riff set against a simple tom beat. In the pre-chorus, Chris pulls out a few classic licks. (0:41)

1

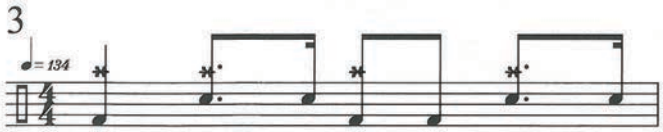
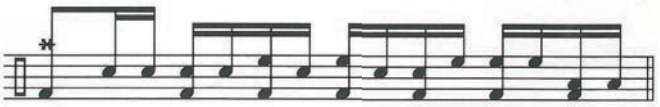


"Are You Gonna Be My Girl"

The first hit single from *Get Born* is an uptempo rocker with a Bo Diddley double-time groove. Cester spices up the pre-chorus accents with some fast triplet fills. (0:50)

2

"Rollover D.J."

Here's a 16th-note fill leading into this song's second verse that carries extra impact due to the Keith Moon–style bass drum accompaniment. (1:09)

3

"Look What You've Done"

Chris evokes late Beatles-era Ringo with this 16th-note-triplet fill that leads from a breakdown into the last chorus of the track. (2:40)

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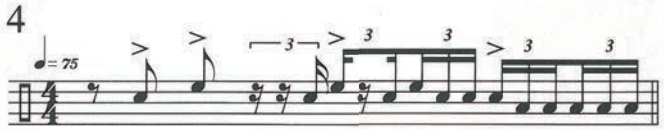
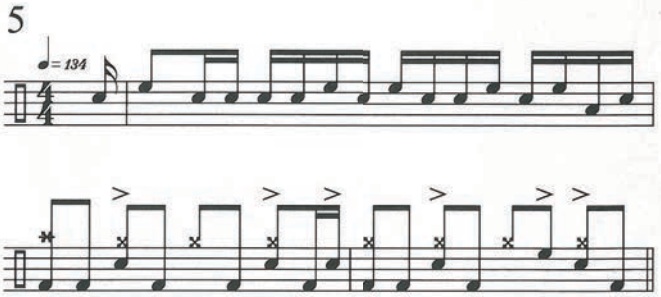
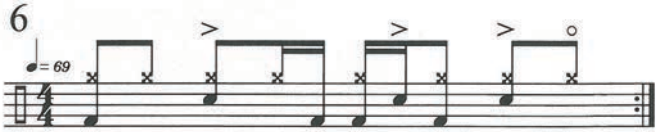
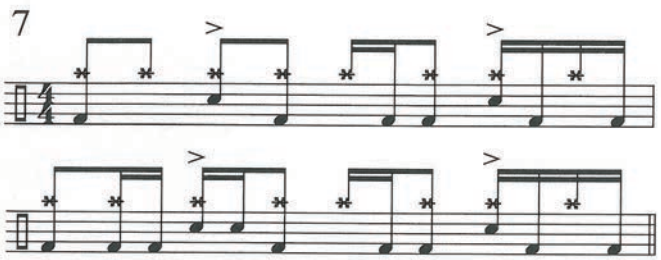
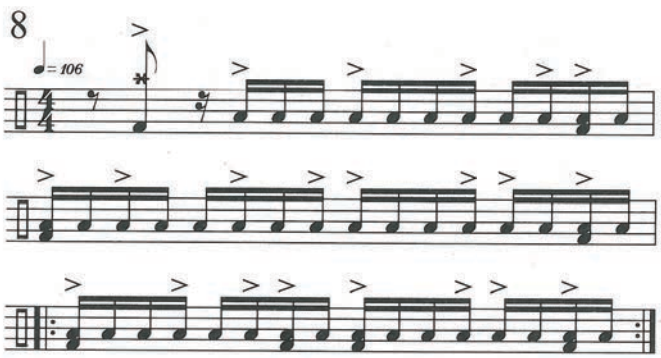

"Get What You Need"

Here's another long, energetic fill that heads into a bridge drumbeat, which locks perfectly with Mark Wilson's bass guitar line. (2:05)

5

"Radio Song"

The drum part for this ballad builds as the song progresses. Here's the groove from the first chorus. (1:01)

6

Contrast that with this pattern from later in the song's instrumental section, featuring a busier and more syncopated bass drum approach. (2:39)

"Take It Or Leave It"

Chris opens this song with a swinging accent pattern on his floor tom that mirrors the track's two guitar parts. Augmented by handclaps on the offbeats, the feel of this intro virtually shouts, *"Party!"* (0:05)

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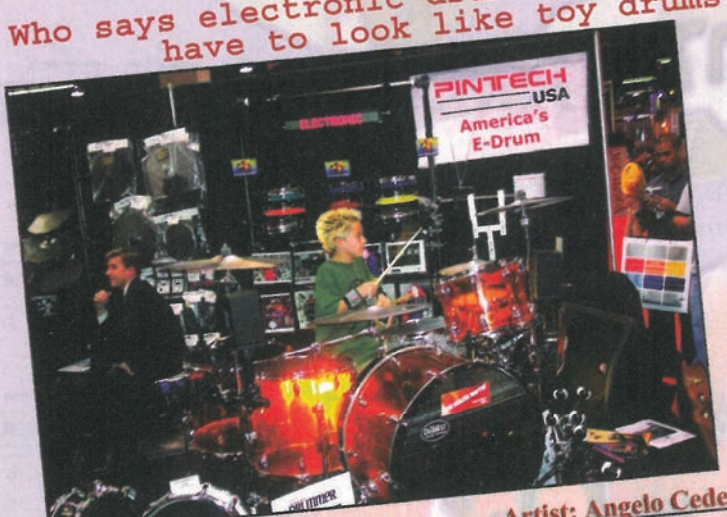

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The Warm-Up

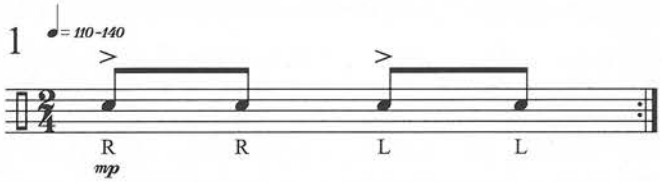
An Approach For Before You Play

by John Riley

For years I prepared to play the drums the same way I prepare to exercise: warming up the large muscle groups first by playing large, loud strokes. Using that method, it would take me quite a while to feel loose and ready to play. Recently I've adopted another strategy and experienced faster and more thorough results.

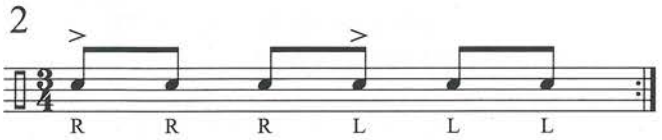
I begin my warm-up very gently, playing easy "drop"-type double strokes—a 4" wrist stroke followed by a bounce—with little regard for speed, sound, or accuracy. (Use the following tempo markings as a guide; a warm-up should be relaxed and smooth, not a chops burnout.)

1 ♩= 110-140



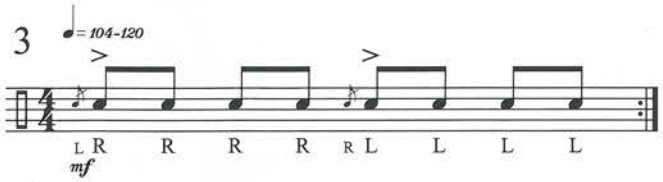
The first objectives of the warm-up are to remind my hands of the feeling of the rebounding sticks and to get some blood moving in their direction. After a minute or two of playing doubles, my hands will feel the sticks rebounding nicely and the muscles in my forearms will begin to relax and align themselves for drumming. Next I'll move on to a minute or two of drop triple strokes, a wrist stroke followed by two bounces.

2

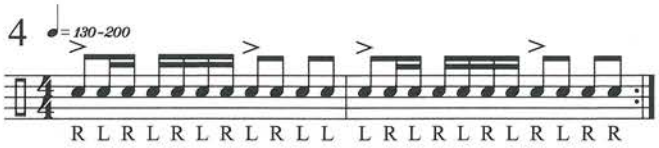


Now I'll feel warm enough to play larger, more controlled strokes, and I'll slow the tempo to play a succession of 12" wrist strokes with an overlapping flam.

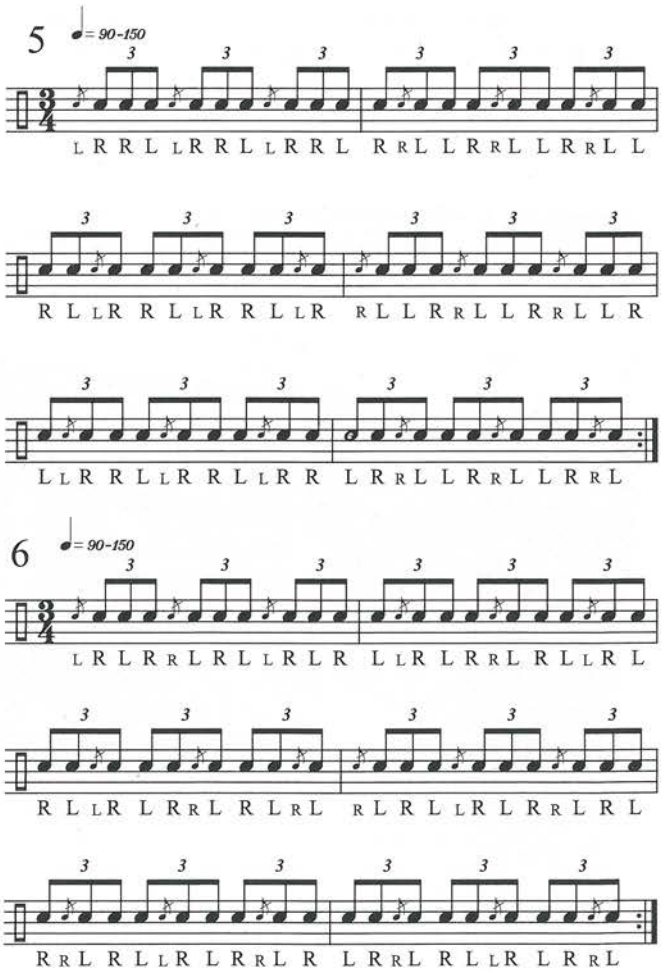
3 ♩= 104-120

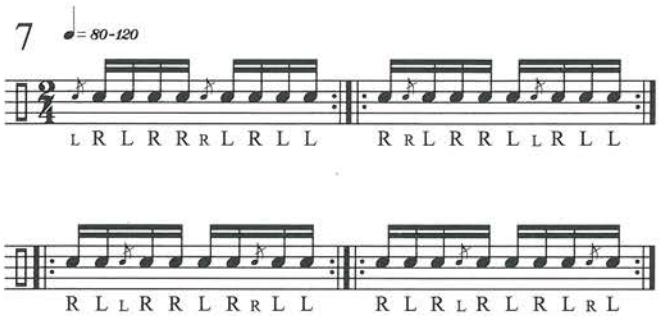


Once the previous move feels good, I'll up the ante and play a combination of singles and paradiddles, like in the following exercise.

4 ♩= 130-200

My final three warm-up sequences involve flams moving through Swiss Army triplets (example 5), flam accents (6), and flam paradiddles (7). I'll spend a minute or two playing each.

5 ♩= 90-150





In addition to physically getting ready to play, throughout the warm-up I'm also thinking about what I hope to accomplish once I get to the drums.

Give this ten- to fifteen-minute warm-up a try each day for two weeks and see how it works for you.

John Riley's career has included work with such artists as John Scofield, Mike Stern, Woody Herman, and Stan Getz. He has also written two critically acclaimed books, The Art Of Bop Drumming *and* Beyond Bop Drumming, *published by Manhattan Music.*

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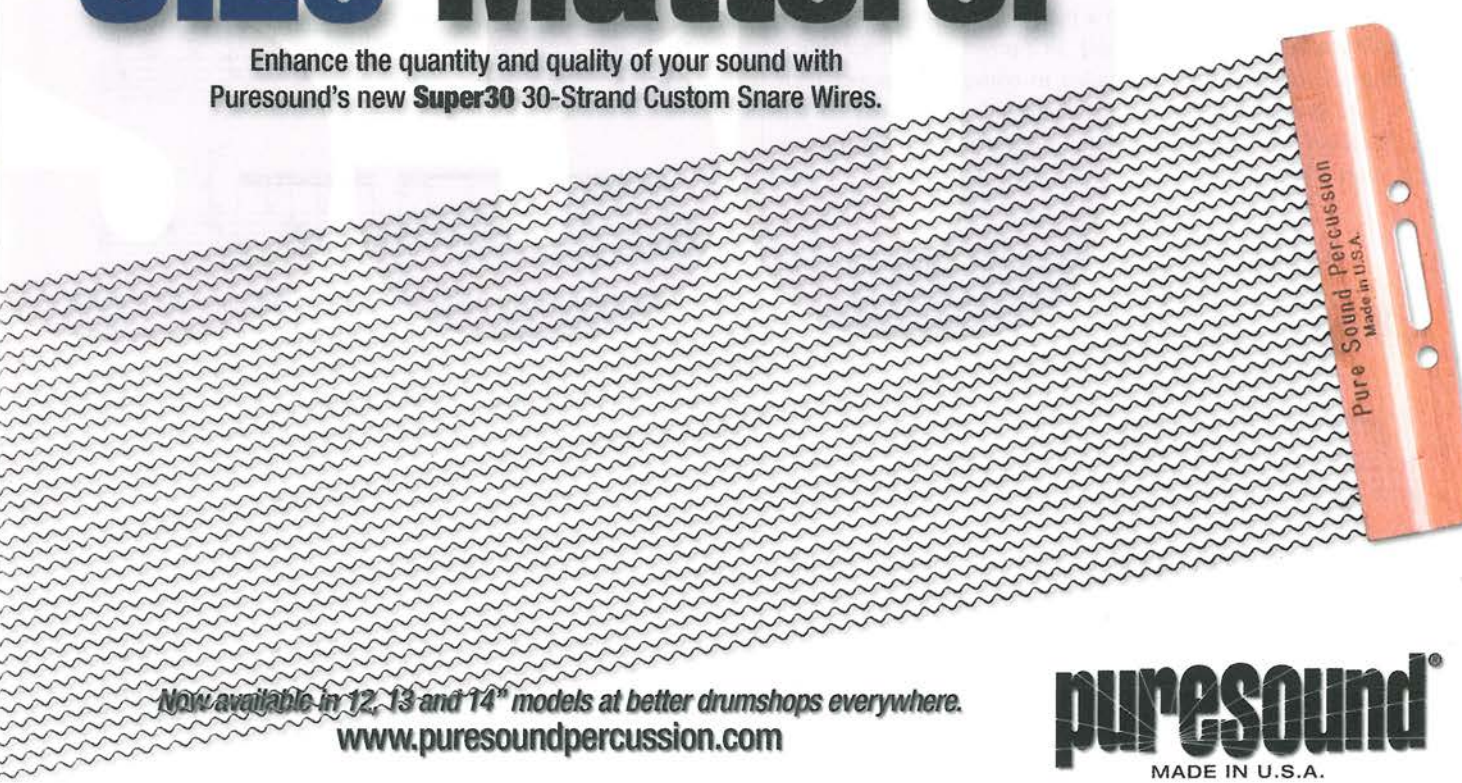

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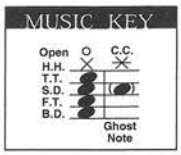
12/8 Time

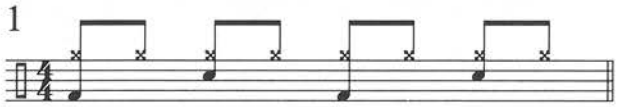
The Alternative Time Signature

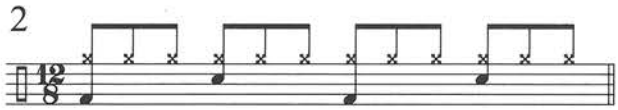
by Ed Breckenfeld



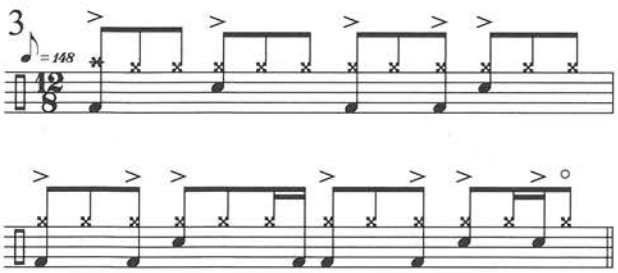
In rock drumming, 4/4 time is certainly king. However, in the past few years of writing the *Off The Record* column for *Modern Drummer*, I've noticed a dramatic increase in the popularity of 12/8 time. What was once the time signature of slow blues, power ballads, and acoustic singer/songwriters has now become common among modern rock, metal, and even punk bands. And progressive drummers are exploring the possibilities of 12/8 far beyond its traditional boundaries. Using examples from contemporary players, let's take a look at how drummers are handling this alternative to the old standby of 4/4.

The main difference between 12/8 and 4/4 is in the feel. 4/4 contains four groups of two 8th notes.

1

12/8 features four groups of *three* 8th notes.

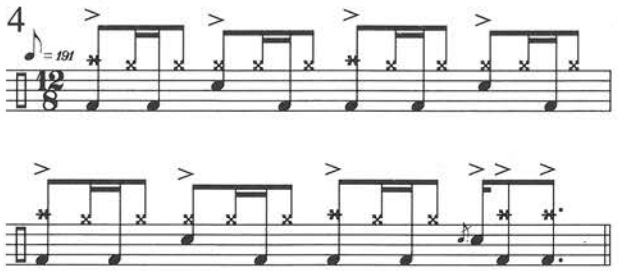
2

These groupings of "three" give 12/8 the wonderful flowing sense of movement that all triplets inherently have. Combining these flowing groups of three with a pair of backbeats makes 12/8 as comfortable and fun to play as 4/4. In a power ballad, not much more than the basic pattern is needed to convey the proper feel. Here's a good example from Matt Cameron's drumming on the Chad Kroeger hit "Hero," from the soundtrack to the movie *Spider-Man*. (0:02)

3



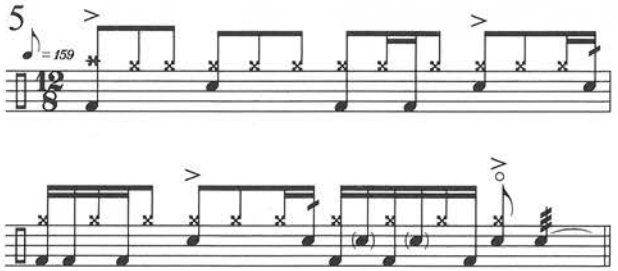
Many players are going beyond the basics to subdivide 12/8 into other interesting rhythmic combinations. The following example shows P.O.D.'s Wuv using a compelling two-against-three polyrhythm on the track "Revolution," from the *Payable On Death* album. If you remove the hi-hat pattern from this beat, it'll feel as if you're back in 4/4 time. (0:06)

4



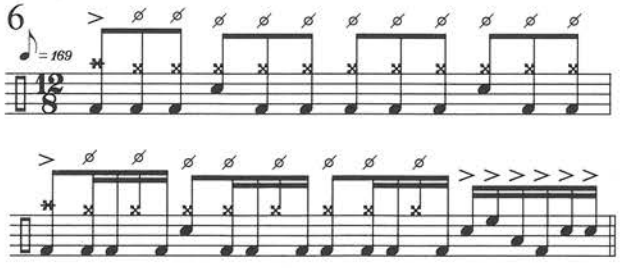
Syncopating bass and snare patterns is perhaps the most popular technique that rock drummers are using in 12/8 time. The following example is played by Jon Theodore of The Mars Volta, from the first section of "Eriatarka" from *De-Loused In The Comatorium*. Notice how the pattern builds from beginning to end. (0:19)

5

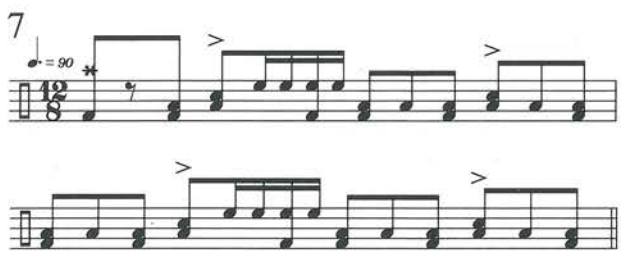


Dave Grohl combines the simple and the intricate with this pair of back-to-back patterns in "The Sky Is Fallin'," from the *Songs For The Deaf* album by Queens Of The Stone Age. The second measure of Grohl's beat involves another polyrhythm, this one sounding like a shuffle pattern against the 12/8 feel. (0:43)

6

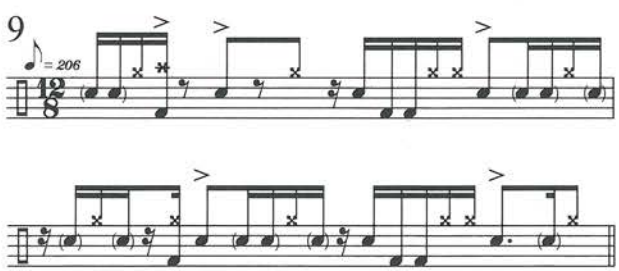


AFI's Adam Carson chose tom-toms to propel his fast 12/8 groove on the song "Silver And Gold," from the *Sing The Sorrow* album. The speed of a dotted quarter note at 90 beats per minute means that Adam's 8th notes were played at 270 bpm. This demonstrates that 12/8 can be quite effective in a punk format. (2:01)

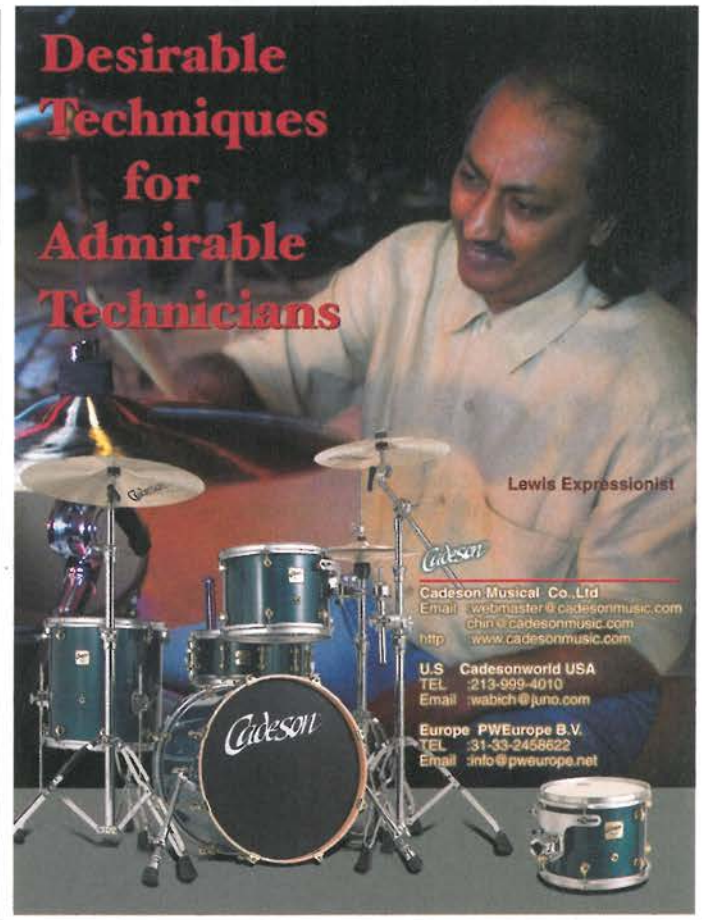


Here's a great example of just how complex modern 12/8 grooves are becoming. On this beat from "Greener With The Scenery," a track from the self-titled album by The Used, drummer Brandon Steineckert plays double-handed 32nd notes on his hi-hat to intensify an already complicated pattern. (0:48)

Finally, here's some masterful syncopation and ghost-note work by Carter Beauford on "You Never Know," from The Dave Matthews Band's *Busted Stuff* CD. The unique flowing feel of 12/8 is present even in Carter's exotic approach.



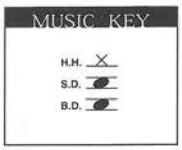
Keep an eye and ear out for 12/8 beats, as drumming in this alluring time signature continues to evolve. Perhaps *you* will be among those to take it to the next level.



The Beat Of Flamenco

A Percussive Spanish Art

by Dan Britt



Flamenco (pronounced "fla-MENG-co") is a genuine art style that comes from the gypsies of southern Spain. It's been described as "an expression of the human condition." By its very nature, flamenco is very rhythmic, vigorous, and emotionally intense. And it exists in many forms: Cante ("CAHN-tay"), the song; Baile ("BYE-lay"), the dance; Palmas, hand clapping; and Toque ("TOH-kay"), guitar playing.

In the last couple of years, I've been performing with a flamenco guitarist within a blues/classic-rock capacity. Naturally, this style differs vastly from other straight-ahead rock bands I've been in. Combining drumset with a flamenco guitar is definitely interesting and often quite challenging. A flamenco guitarist sometimes plays a continuous series of rapid finger strokes called rasgueados, often taking the form of five-stroke patterns.

Intrigued by this style, I sought to learn about some of the basic flamenco patterns, or compases (specific rhythmic forms). These rhythmic patterns convey the mood or unique emotional atmosphere of the piece being performed.

In this article, we'll work on a few of the rasgueado forms. Begin by practicing the following exercises on a pad or snare drum with a metronome to strengthen your execution of the quintuplet. A mixed sticking is suggested, as it seems to simplify the later application on the drumset. Strive for clean and even strokes.

1

2

Now let's examine four common forms of flamenco: farruca, tangos, soleares, and alegrias. For each form, we'll present the basic rhythm and then a drumset application. The tempos shown are only a general guide, as most forms can vary greatly in speed as the performance progresses.

Farruca

Mood: dramatic, masculine

Tempo: quarter note = 110

Farruca is a folk dance in 4/4 with a strong character. It employs 8th notes on beats 1, 3, and 4. The accent is on beat 3. The quintuplet (or five-stroke) is on beat 2.

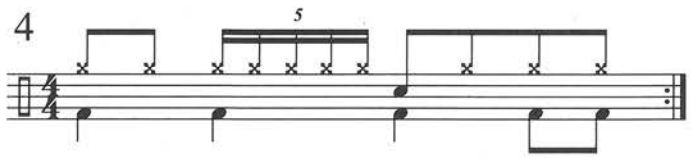
Basic rhythm

3

Drumset application

This is a basic application, with the rhythms played mostly on the hi-hat, only coming over to the snare for the accent on beat 3. The mixed sticking allows you to come to the snare drum consistently with the right hand.

4



Tangos

Mood: festive, lively

Tempo: quarter note = 130

Also in 4/4, tangos ("tun-goss") is a rhythm of Gypsy origin and one of the oldest flamenco forms. In this pattern, there are quintuplets on beats 2 and 3, with 8th notes on beats 1 and 4.

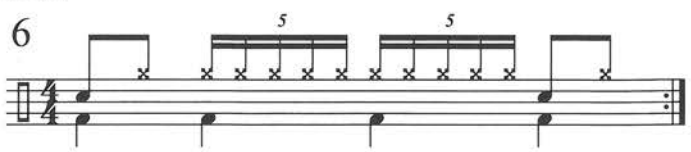
Basic rhythm

5

Drumset application

Again, most of the rhythm is played on the hi-hat, except for beats 1 and 4, which are on the snare drum to match a strong guitar strum.

6



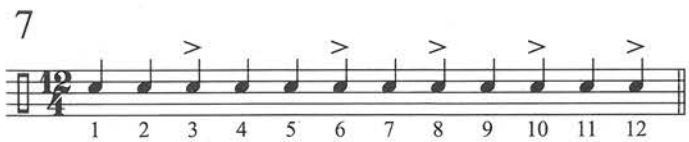
Soleares

Mood: solitary, introspective

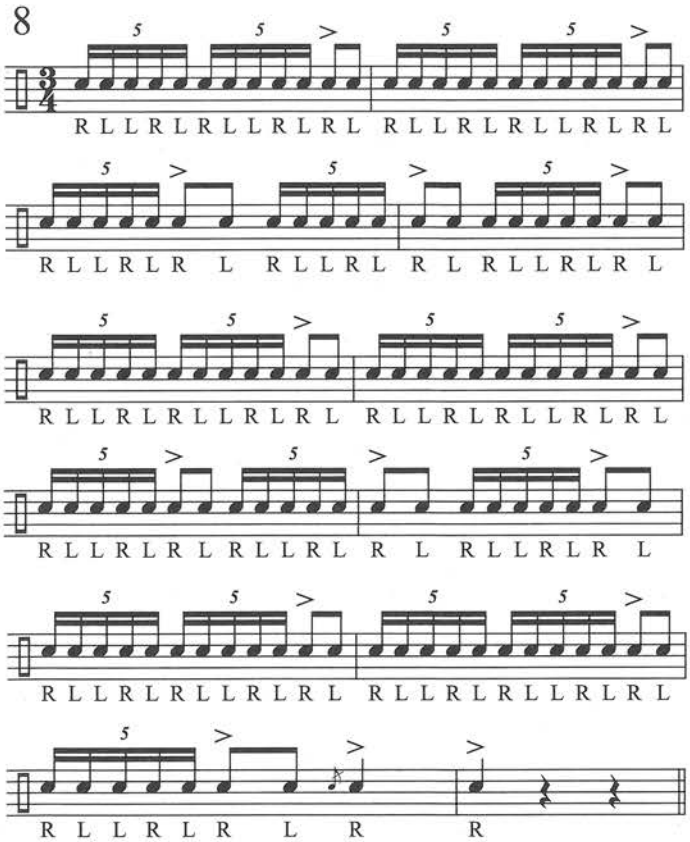
Tempo: quarter note = 120

Soleares ("so-lay-ARE-es") is generally considered the oldest flamenco form, and is often referred to as "the mother of flamenco" because other important forms are derived from it. Unlike farruca and tangos, soleares is made up of a twelve-beat cycle structured over four bars of 3/4 time. Accent patterns are the basis of many of the most important flamenco rhythms. The accents in this twelve-beat cycle are on beats 3, 6, 8, 10, and 12.

Accent pattern

7

Here's the accent pattern applied to the basic rhythm in 3/4 time.

8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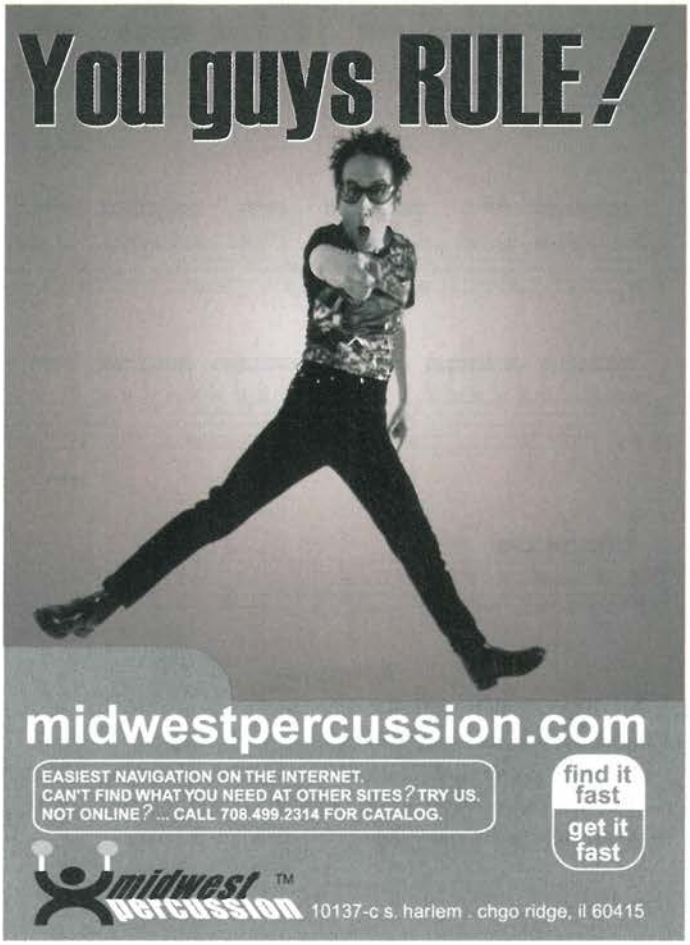
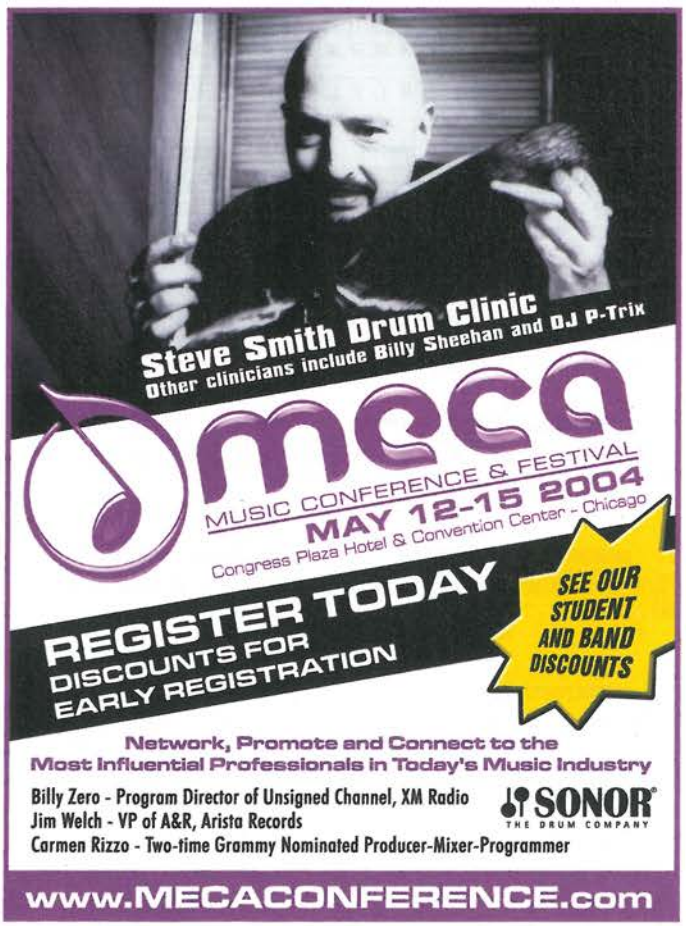
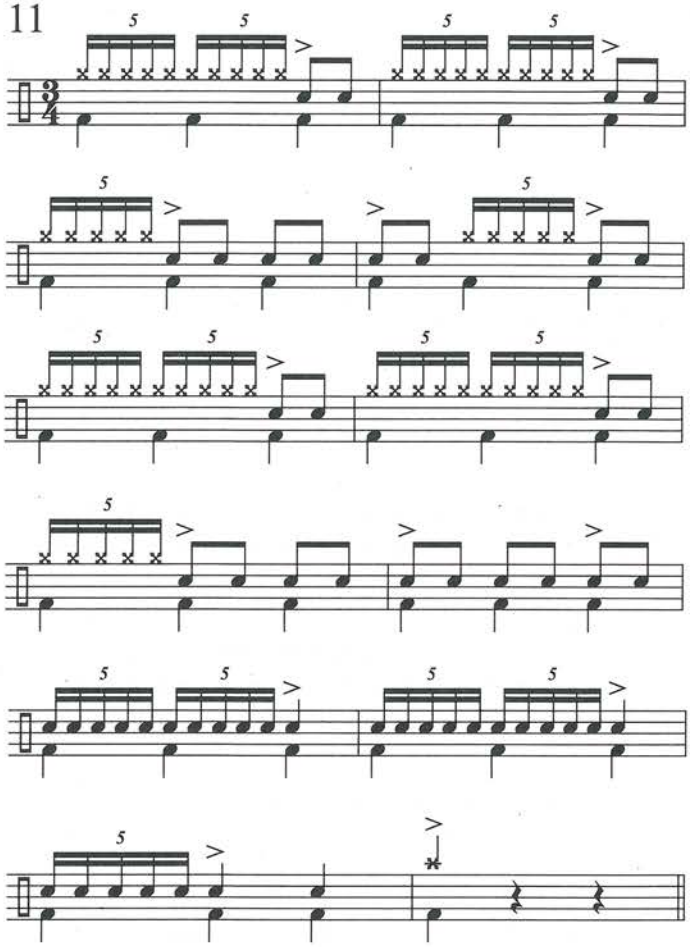
R L L R L R L L R L R L R L L R L R L R L





motion of your right and left hands going back and forth between the hi-hat and snare. As you'll see, the last ten beats are played on the snare drum to create a more direct synchronicity. Again, like soleares, you'll feel the twelve-beat form.

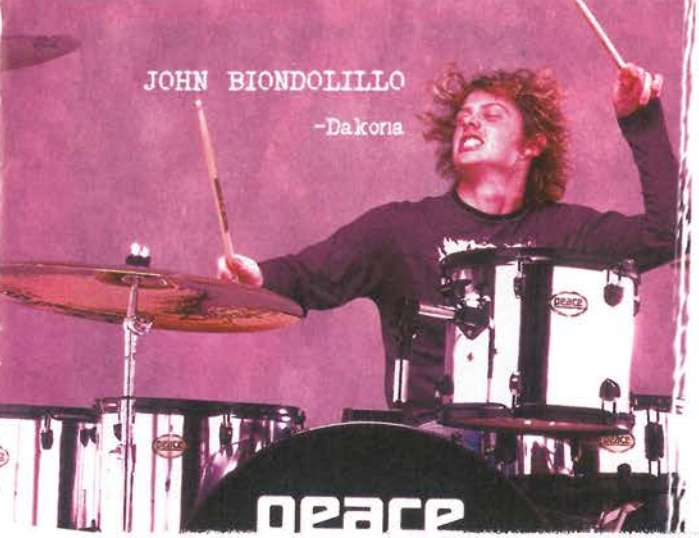


The percussion instruments traditionally played with this style of guitar are cajons, castanets, handclaps, sticks, and dancing shoes. Interestingly, in order to match the quintuplet feel of these patterns, the dancer often has a third cleat on the right foot along with the two on the left foot.

As with every style of music, to really get the true feel, I would suggest listening to established flamenco artists. A short list would include Paco De Lucia, Paco Peña, Sabicas, and Tony Rivera.

The previous drumset applications are only a starting point. Experiment with applying some of your own ideas to the drumset based on these basic flamenco forms. It's different, it's challenging, and it's fun!

Dan Britt would like to thank drummer Stephane Chamberland for his expertise and assistance in writing this article. For more on Flamenco drumming, contact Britt and Chamberland directly via their Web sites, www.DannyBritt.com and www.StephaneChamberland.com.



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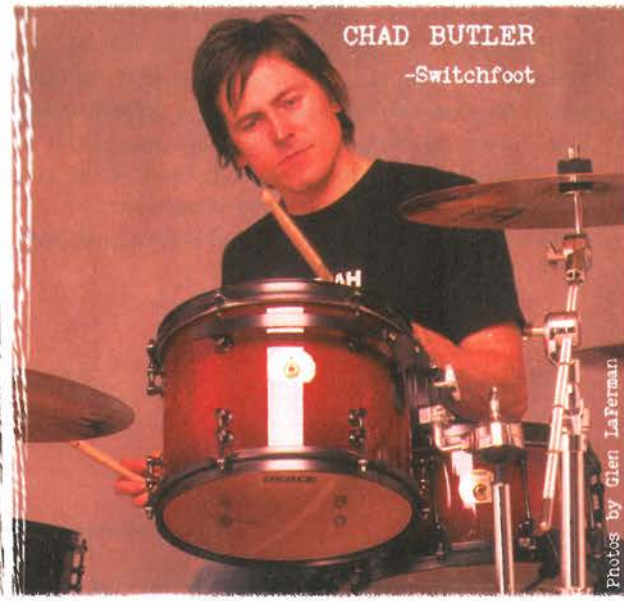

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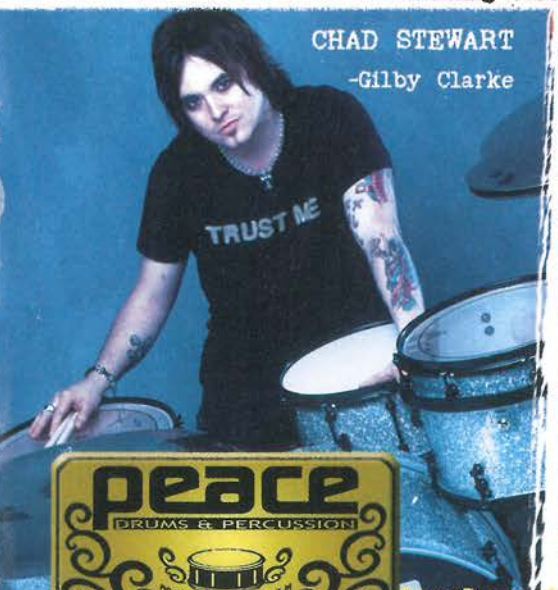

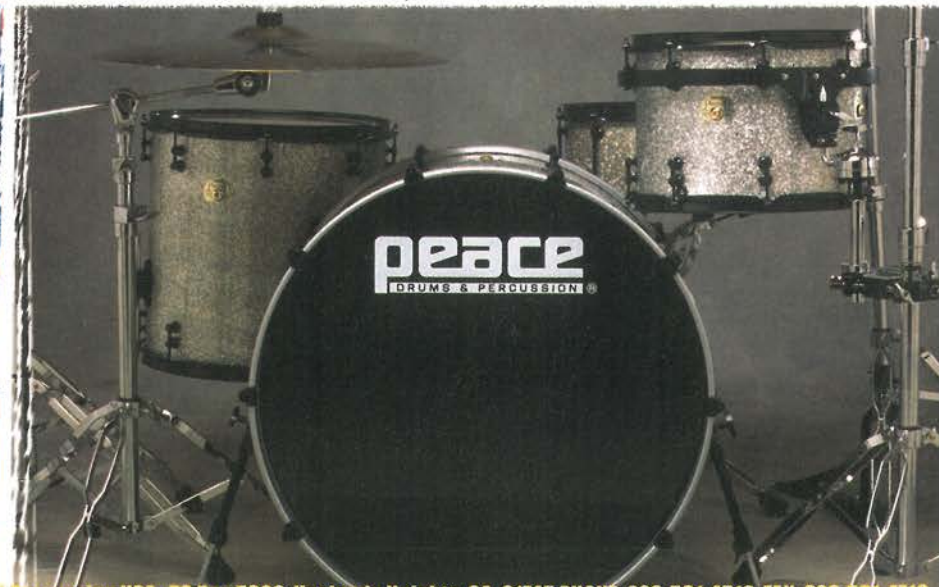

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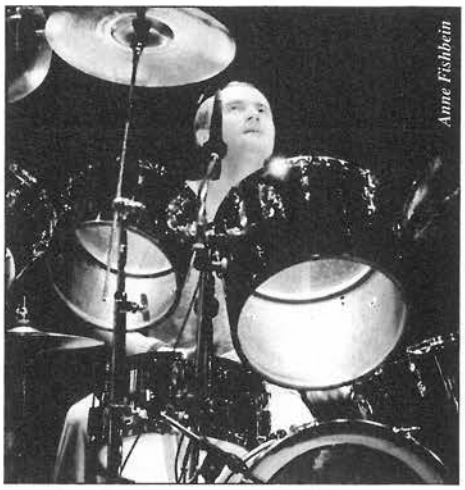
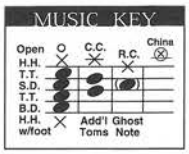
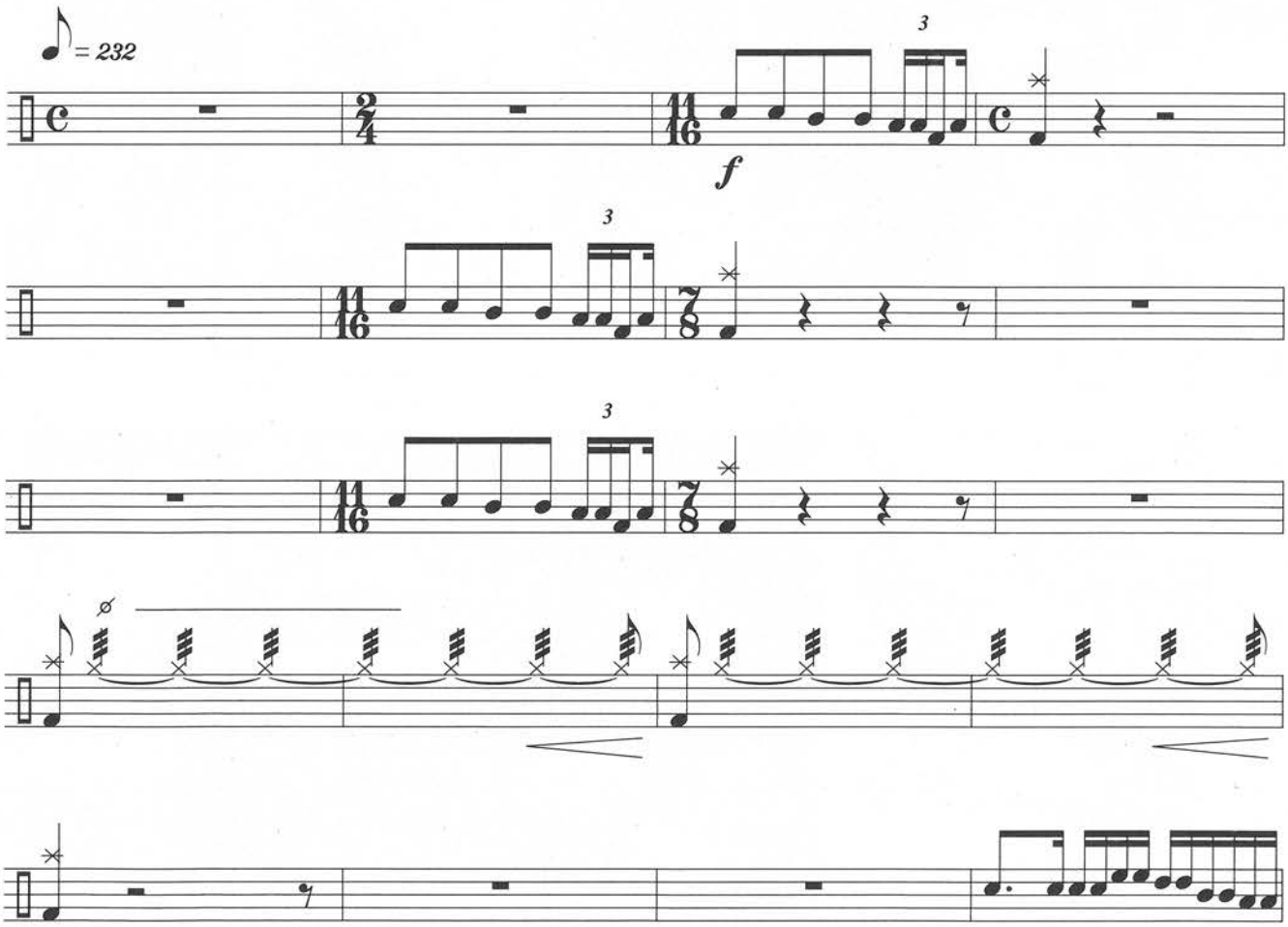
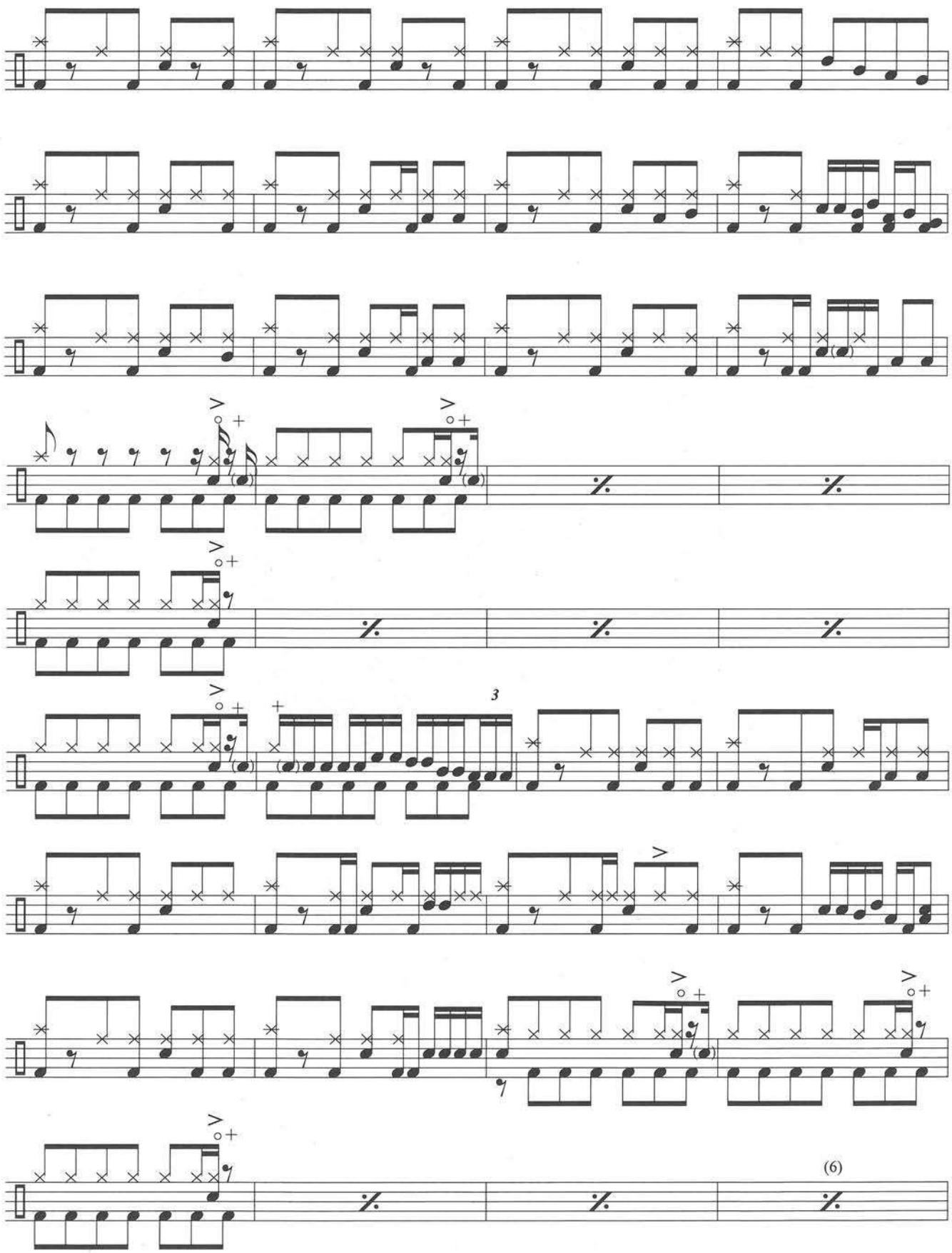


Phil Collins

"Dance On A Volcano"

Transcribed by Joe Bergamini

Genesis began as one of the premier art rock groups of the early '70s, became one of the cutting-edge progressive rock bands at the turn of the decade, and morphed into a phenomenally successful pop act in the '80s. At the helm for most of this adventure was a tremendously talented musician named Phil Collins. Although he's now known as a Grammy-winning singer/songwriter, Phil's true fans know that his drumming is just as inspirational.

"Dance On A Volcano," from Genesis's *A Trick Of The Tail* album (released in 1976), is a great example of Phil's playing. This tune clearly demonstrates his ability to traverse difficult arrangements and time changes smoothly and with incomparable groove. Even though this is fairly early on in his career, Phil's up-front tom sound is on full display here, along with his tasty use of the hi-hat.

Most of this song is in 7/8, but Phil plays various feels within the seven, sometimes phrasing it 4-3 and sometimes 3-4. He mixes these variations deftly while never losing the forward motion of the song. The main verse is particularly interesting—a driving bass drum pulse with the snare and hi-hat accenting the "&" of beat 6. Now *that's* original. Pay attention to how Phil phrases and places his fills, his choice of sounds and colors on the kit, and how he builds the intensity with more ghost notes and thicker phrasing as the song develops.

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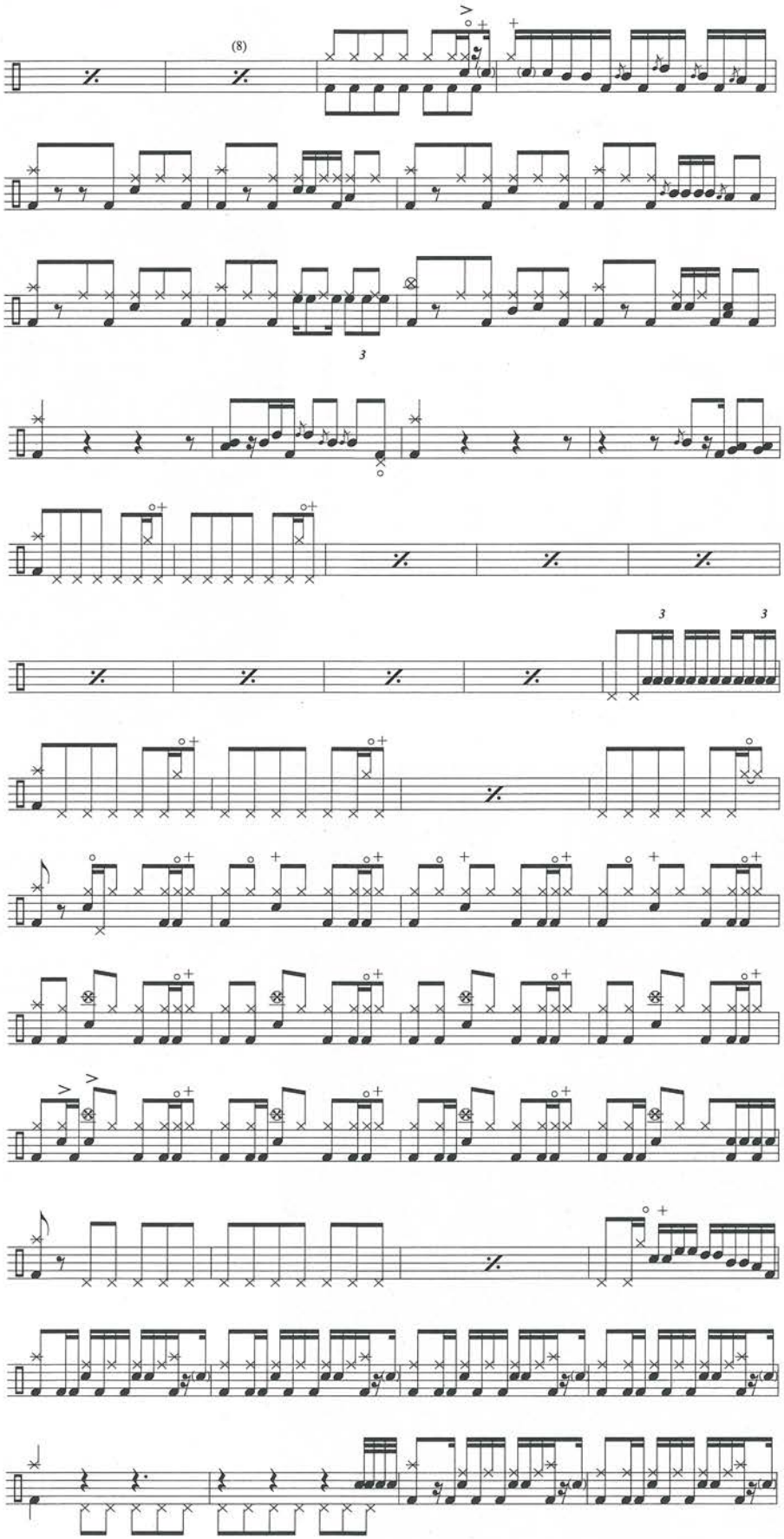
Phil Collins

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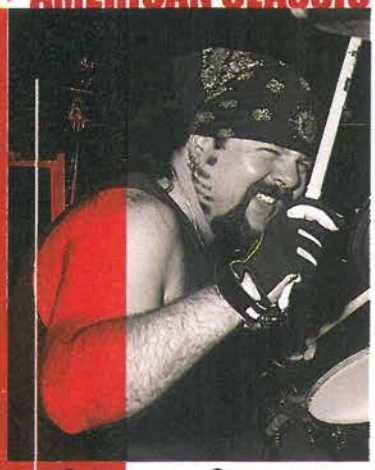

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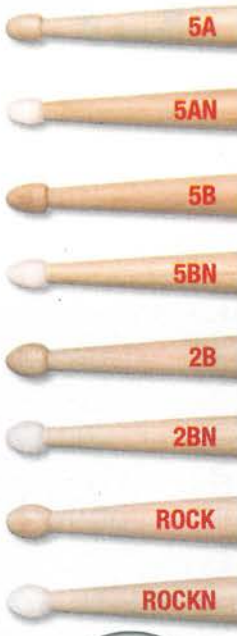

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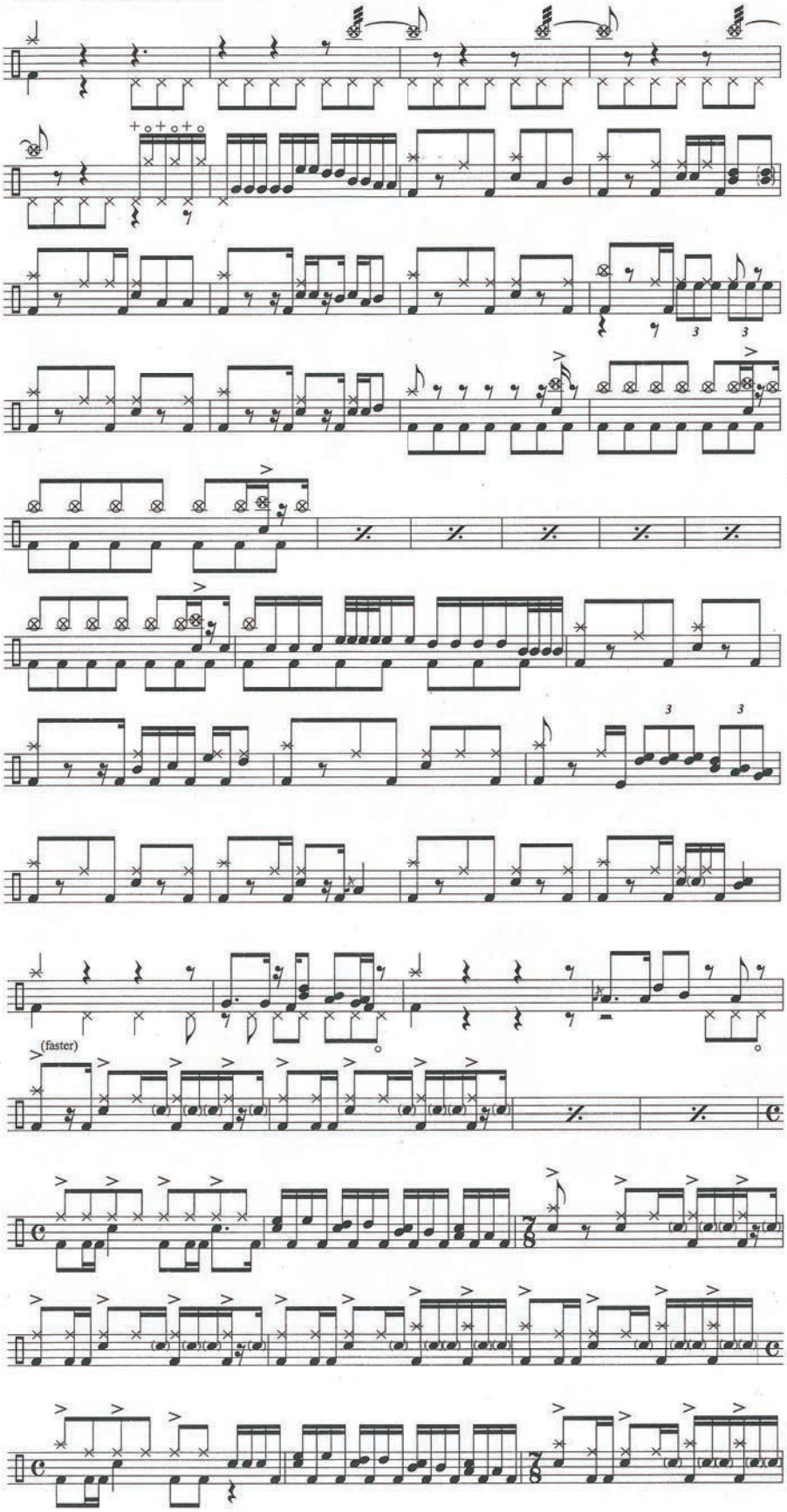
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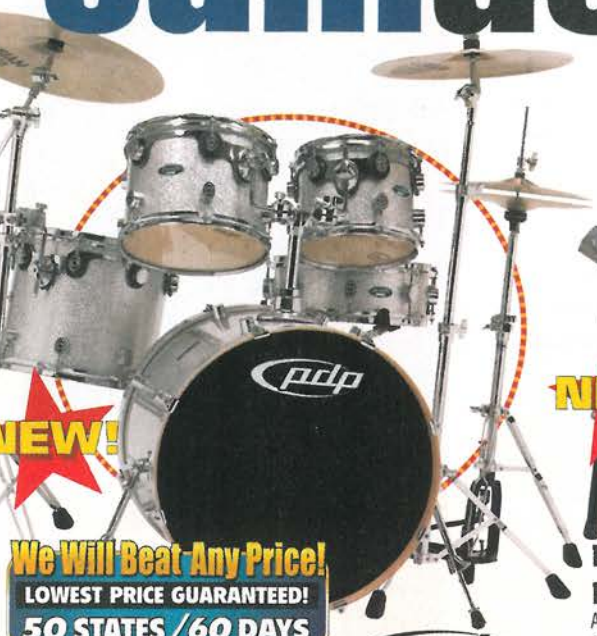

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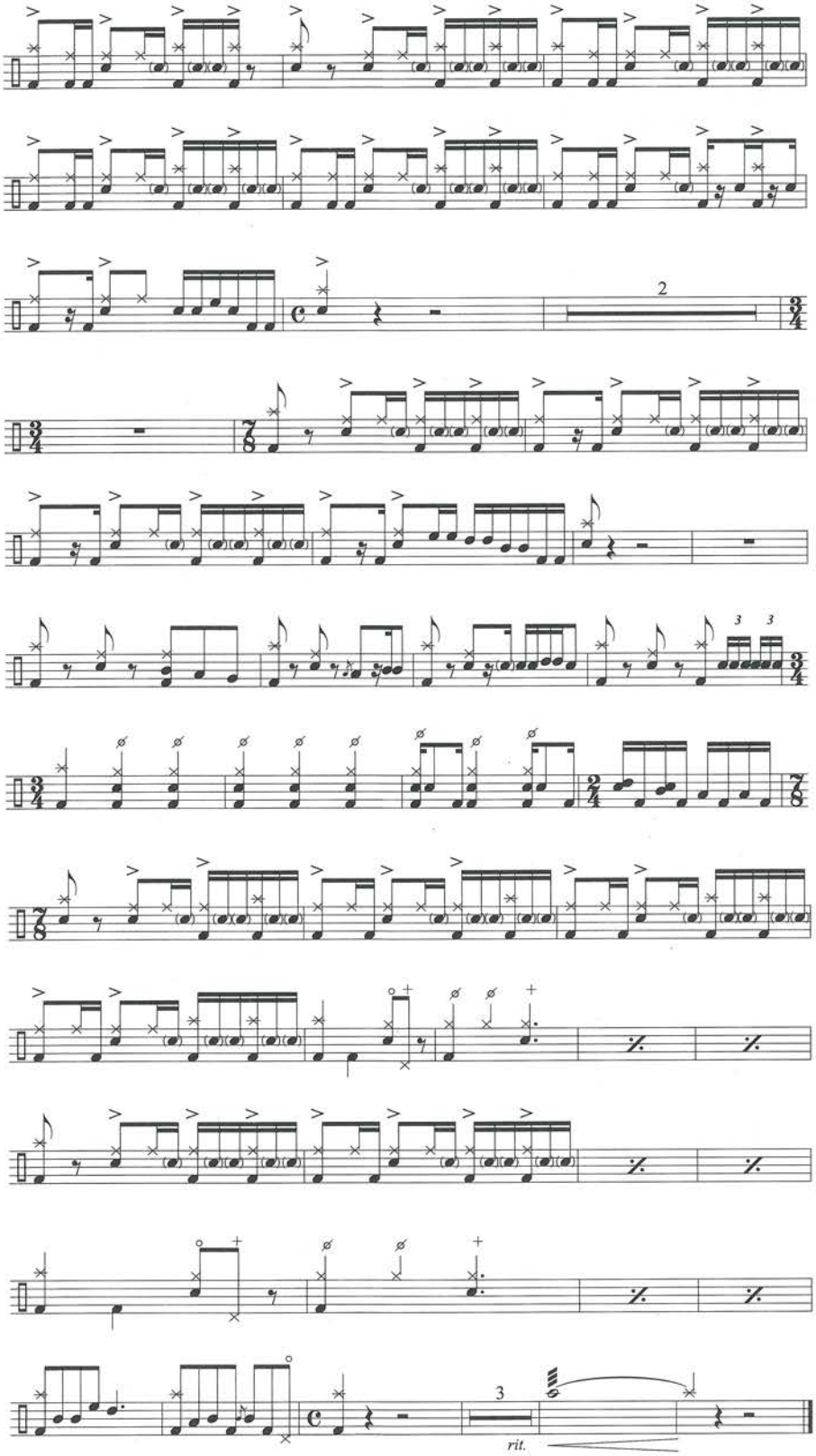
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The Realities Of Reading

Debunking The Myths

by Matt Ritter

The December 2003 issue of *Modern Drummer* included Ron Spagnardi's last editorial, titled "Why Read?" Ron's final statement to the drumming community focused on the importance of being musically literate. I'd like to support Ron's effort by examining some of the myths that discourage drummers from learning to read.

Myth #1: Reading Is Hard

This myth probably does more harm than any of the others. It lurks in the back of many drummers' minds and prevents them from even *trying* to learn how to read. Such drummers often say, "Well, I don't really need to read." But let's face it: If these same drummers thought that learning to read was easy, wouldn't they just do it? The reality is that if you approach reading with the right attitude and practice methods, it will likely be one of the easiest skills you'll ever have to learn as a drummer.

I've taught drumming for several years, and I can honestly say that every student I've encountered has found the recognition of common music notation figures to be significantly easier than, say, playing a fast samba, grooving in an odd time signature, or playing a 32-bar solo. I firmly believe that the same will hold true for you.

A handful of phenomenal drummers have succeeded despite their lack of reading skills—not because of it.

Myth #2: Reading Is Boring

The reality is that reading can be tremendous fun. Our enjoyment of a given activity is often a reflection of our attitude toward that activity. This truth was hammered home to me during a lesson I was giving to a very young student. On this particular day the student seemed to be disinterested and bored. I tried all of my usual tricks to get the creative juices flowing and make the lesson fun, but nothing worked. Suddenly, the student threw his hands down and cried, "Can't we do the notes? I *love* the notes." By that he meant he wanted to work on the reading pages! Obviously, "fun" is in the eye of the beholder.

Keep the above story in mind, and look for ways to enjoy the learning process. For example, when you're working on a drum chart with a play-along CD, it can be quite a thrill to play the written figures and hear the recorded band play them in unison with you. If you pick up a copy of *Modern Drummer*, it can be a blast to read the transcriptions and be able to immediately understand how a cool groove was played.

Myth #3: Many Great Drummers Don't Read

Opinions regarding the "greatness" of drummers vary, and there will always be those who cling tightly to this myth. However, I have some first-hand experience that contradicts it. Years ago, I worked for DCI Music Video. During that time, I met more of the world's great drummers than most people meet in a lifetime, and I saw that nearly all of them read music. This leads me to say with confidence that the percentage of truly great drummers who are nonreaders is very small.

Drumming is like most things: Those who are the most successful at it are usually the ones who strive to become as educated and as skilled as possible in every aspect of it. The myth of great drummers who don't read has been perpetuated because of a handful of phenomenal talents who have succeeded *despite* their lack of reading skills—not *because* of it. The very reason that these success-without-reading stories are so well known is that they are anomalies rather than the norm.

This, of course, does not mean that all successful drummers would be capable of sitting in with the New York Philharmonic. Reading ability, like any skill, exists in varying degrees. For this reason, I have long suspected that many of the self-proclaimed "nonreaders" in the drum world can, in fact, read a bit. A famous drummer who reads basic notation may prefer to say "I don't read" than to face being thrown into the hot seat with a big band or a high-pressure studio date. Don't let this misleading scenario derail you from your own quest to be as musically educated as possible.

Myth #4: Reading Stifles Creativity

Being musically literate can open many creative doors. Drummers who can read the countless drum books on the market have access to a vast supply of new ideas and inspiration. But there's much more to the story.

Imagine trying to become a wonderful poet, like Rudyard Kipling, or a brilliant speaker, like Martin Luther King Jr., without understanding the basic principles of grammar. When one fully grasps the structure of an art form, one is better able to see all of the possibilities within that structure.

As we learn to read musical notation, we better understand the different ways of grouping and subdividing beats. We see, for example, that a quarter note (the note most commonly used to represent a "beat" of music) can be divided into two 8th notes, four 16th notes, and so forth. We can then look at every instance where a quarter note occurs and see the myriad ways of expressing that musical moment. We are no longer limited to what we've heard another drummer do. Because we understand the parameters of the game, we can truly be creative within those parameters.

Now, don't get me wrong about the value of learning from other drummers. We all should listen to and learn from those who have come before us. The good news is that the ability to read makes this important educational opportunity even more valuable. Having a knowledge of musical notation allows us to create transcriptions. That is, it allows us to hear another drummer's playing and map it out on paper. With this musical diagram in front of us, we can not only internalize what that drummer played, we can also look for areas of the transcribed rhythm that we might like to vary or expand upon.

Myth #5: Reading Is Like Deciphering A Code

Reading music is no different from reading printed English. It's simply a matter of learning to recognize—and then memorize—a group of written symbols. Those symbols are not as numerous as one might fear. Most of them stand for different ways of dividing up a beat of music. Virtually every beginning drum text starts out with a clear explanation of these symbols and how they are counted.

Another idea is to scan through any transcription in *MD* and make a list of the symbols commonly used to show the basic divisions of a quarter note. Please have a teacher assist you in this process. Ask that teacher to explain the rhythm represented by each symbol on your list, and then commit these symbols to memory. Train your eye to recognize them instantly so that you can play the musical figures they represent, at any tempo. You'll encounter these same symbols for the rest of your musical life. They're by no means every symbol used in musical notation, but they are a good percentage of the ones you'll see most often.

When I have students work on a reading page for an extended period of time, they often hit a point at which they feel that they aren't actually reading anymore. They apologetically say, "I'm just memorizing this." But remember, in the beginning, memorization is the goal! Language teachers send students home with lists of vocabulary words to memorize as a first step to learning that language. In our case, the "words" to be memorized are the symbols of written music.

I've occasionally had students try to trick themselves out of memorizing by reading a sheet of music from right to left, or from the bottom of the page to the top. Their belief that music is a complicated code has inspired them to make things difficult for themselves. These tricks could, conceivably, help an already-accomplished reader to strengthen his or her mental focus. However, for the majority of students, mental focus is not the issue at hand. Their most pressing need is simply the memorization of the symbols of written music. Tricking yourself out of memorizing those symbols is tricking yourself out of learning to read.

I hope that, by examining these myths, we've made the prospect of becoming musically literate a bit less intimidating. Find a teacher, tell yourself you can do it, and enter the world of reading with enthusiasm. Your drumming life will expand tremendously.

Matt Ritter has toured extensively as a musical theater drummer, and has played for countless Broadway performers. As a jazz drummer, he has worked with such artists as pianist/composer Robert Silverman and bass great Ron McClure. Matt's drum students have been heard in school recitals, in New York City rock clubs, and on stage at Carnegie Hall. For more information, visit www.MattRitterMusic.com.

Editor's note: Next month in our Basics *department we'll be kicking off a series on learning to read music and drum notation.*

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Steve Marcus
Buddy's Buddy

by Robyn Flans

Saxophonist Steve Marcus began his impressive career in the 1960s, recording or performing with Stan Kenton, Gary Burton, Donald Byrd, Herbie Mann, and Larry Coryell. In 1975, Marcus joined The Buddy Rich Orchestra, where he remained for twelve years. For the past six years, he's worked with Buddy's Buddies, a group of Rich band veterans paying tribute to their former boss. "It's absolutely terrific," says Marcus. "I love doing it because the band is so good. We've played together so much that we can go in and nail it right away."

Throughout his career, Marcus has worked with an amazing succession of drummers, from Bob Moses and Alan Dawson to Steve Gadd and Steve Smith. Working on the *Burning For Buddy* and Buddy Rich Scholarship Concert projects has brought him into musical contact with such stellar drummers as Neil Peart, Matt Sorum, Simon Phillips, Dennis Chambers, and Omar Hakim, all of whom Marcus gushes about. Still, he agrees with those who have witnessed the drum genius of Buddy Rich and said, "There are great drummers, and then there is Buddy Rich."

"It didn't matter whether Buddy was playing in the best places or the worst places. He always gave 110%."

MD: The obvious first question is: What was it like to work with Buddy?

Steve: Where do you begin with a guy like that? Anything I say is really a cliché. "He was more than a drummer." "He was one of a kind." Those kinds of things are all true, but there were other elements about him that were very special, as a person. I had twelve years with Buddy, which is a record. A lot of people walked away from that band not liking him, even though he had made better players out of them. I guess they weren't ready for that kind of personality.

MD: Buddy's reputation has been documented by tapes that display some very negative behavior. So you can't honestly say that the rumors aren't true.

Steve: No, but taken out context, those things can be misleading. I'm not defending him 100%, because there were times when it was over the top and totally unfair and unjustified. But you have to go one step further and ask why. I spent a lot of time sitting in the front of the bus with him as a friend, and he let me in on a lot of things. Everybody knows he started in vaudeville as a baby, and became a highly paid child star. But there were a lot of degrading elements of being a child star back then, like having to wear short pants at fourteen, and so much more. Buddy clearly carried a lot of the hurt from that into his adulthood. I saw the bad side of him, but I saw the extremely good side too. He used to make milkshakes for the trombone section, but you're not going to hear about that.

MD: Tell us about your first meeting with him.

Steve: It was in the spring of 1975. I'd just come

off a fusion band with guitarist Steve Kahn, bassist Will Lee, keyboardist Don Grolnick, and Steve Gadd. I got a call from a guy named Lloyd Michaels to do the Buddy Rich band. I took the gig, but I still had a few dates to do with the fusion band, one of which was at the Village Vanguard. Buddy was in the audience that night. Just before we went up, I absentmindedly said to Steve Gadd, "By the way, my new boss is sitting in the front." He turned absolutely white.

Ed Marz

Then there was my first rehearsal with the band. Buddy came in about fifteen minutes after everyone else, with his manager on one side and his valet on the other. He walked into the room and proceeded to kick the hell out of his drumset: "This is the wrong this, this is the wrong that." Everybody's hearts were in their throats. In those days they set up the band facing Buddy. He sat down at the drums and called the song, all the while looking at me. I was wearing an Indian shirt, and I had a big, frizzy hairdo like Noel Redding. Buddy called a number with a tenor-sax solo. When it came time for my solo, I stood up and played, thinking to myself, "You're doing fine, don't worry. Everything's cool." I finished the solo and sat down. The rest of the chart went by, and the song ended. There was dead silence. Buddy panned the band with his eyes, then looked at me and said, "From now on the other tenors will play the solo." I caught myself from falling down a well and said to myself, "This is Buddy Rich."

A couple of days later we were still rehearsing to make a record. One tune in the book was a soprano feature that they didn't do because it was kind of hard for the trumpets. I showed up with a waa-waa pedal and a big amplifier. We recorded the song, and Buddy lost it. We were really close friends from then on.

That was a hell of a way to start, but subsequently Buddy taught me how to play credenzas. He'd leave me out there ten or twelve minutes at a time, playing all alone. I just loved it. I couldn't have asked for more.

MD: What set Buddy apart from other drummers you've played with?

Steve: Well, his technique is obvious. He was the fastest car in the world. But that wasn't really what separated him from the pack. It was his finesse. There's a term I heard recently to describe technique without musicality: "empty virtuosity." That was *not* Buddy.

You can divide Buddy into two parts. There was all the fame, the Johnny Carson TV appearances, the expensive clothes, the non-jazz stage presence. But it all went away when he got behind the drums. Once he was playing music, he couldn't care less about anything else. He was just some guy who happened to be one of the greatest musicians you'll ever hear on this earth. It didn't matter whether Buddy was playing in the best places or the worst places. He always gave 110%. I listened to his solos for twelve years, and they never ceased to amaze me.

MD: You mentioned another great, Steve Gadd. Tell us about playing with him.

Steve: He's a joy to play with. You can say he provides great support or talk about his time feel, but again, that's only scratching the surface. Even Buddy couldn't find the words to describe his appreciation for

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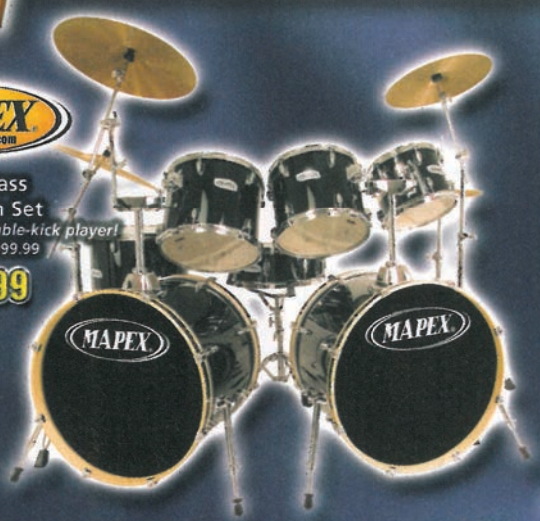

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Steve Gadd, and he didn't have a lot of good things to say about many drummers.

An important part of a drummer's job is to play the kind of time that is appropriate for a given soloist. That's something that Steve Gadd does better than most others. It's the difference between being a drummer and being a musician involved in more than just providing a rhythm foundation.

It's hard to talk about this. A lot of times you start talking about a player and it's almost like talking about a kitchen—copper pots, the best tiles, a commercial stove—when the real question is, "What does the food taste like?"

MD: Tell us about some of your other favorite drummers.

Steve: Steve Smith tops my list, and I'm not just saying that because we've been playing together for six years in Buddy's Buddies. The fact of the matter is that from the very beginning, he showed the most understanding of the idiom that we're playing. He's a great, great musician. I gotta say the same thing for Marvin "Smitty" Smith. It's not so much a matter of their knowing what they're doing, but knowing what *you're* doing and responding to it immediately. Listening to the CD we made at Ronnie Scott's, you can hear Steve's response to something I did or something the piano did. It was just like any of the other great jazz drummers of the past. This music is the product of another era—not "old-fashioned," but still from another time. So for a contemporary drummer to have knowledge and sensitivity in this idiom is unusual. Steve really delivers it 100%.

I started out at Berklee, and the hero there at that time was Alan Dawson. He was a teacher and a spectacular drummer. He was the first guy I played with who made my hair stand up. Again, it was the finesse that was amazing. I had played with records as a kit, and here was a guy in the flesh who sounded like the thing I had aspired to do.

MD: If you had to compose a want ad for a drummer, how would it read? What is the job requirement?

Steve: Somebody who is not afraid to take off his or her clothes, musically. If they don't, *you're* not going to. If the whole band is not willing to get naked, then somebody is going to get embarrassed and the whole thing is going to back off.

I've played with some very passionate drummers in my time. The first was a guy named Stu Martin, who has been long forgotten by many people. In the early '60s we played together with Donald Byrd for three months in Madrid. Stu was a very special player. Another guy people don't talk about is Bruno Carr, who did all that Ray Charles stuff. We played together with Herbie Mann.

MD: What was special about Bruno?

Steve: Again, the feel. It always comes back to that food thing: Everybody can make a hamburger, but they don't all taste the same. The hardest thing to do is to play the simple, supportive stuff well, because there is no place to hide. You can't hide behind chops or speed.

MD: Any other outstanding memories come to mind?

Steve: Tony Williams was another guy who was at Berklee when I was. I played with

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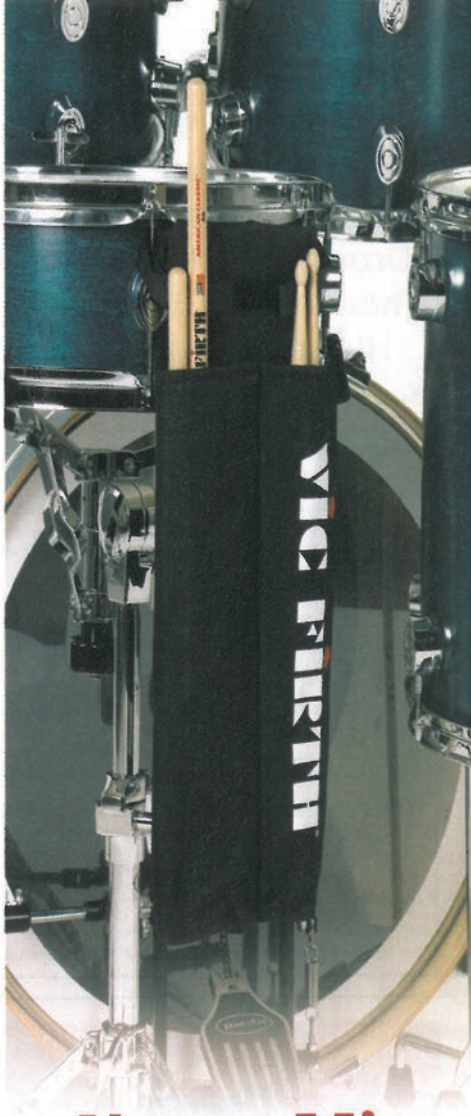

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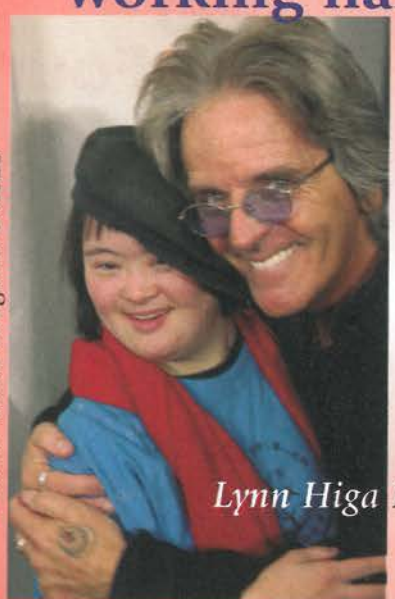

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Steve Marcus

him when he was about fourteen years old and his sticks were half as big as he was. I remember standing in one of the hallways at Berklee listening to Tony sing, note for note, a John Coltrane solo that was about twelve minutes long. That gives you an idea of his involvement in the music, which translated into his role as the rhythm provider and so much more.

Another of my favorites is Jack DeJohnette. It was out of this world to play with him. Then there's Bobby Moses. He and I go back to the mid-'60s, when we were living in New York with Larry Coryell. Bobby was one of the first, if not *the* first, jazz/rock fusion drummers. They just reissued a record we made together called *Tomorrow Never Knows*, and it sounds really good. What I loved about working with him was his openness, his ability to take it all off and dive over that cliff and not worry about landing. That's what it's all about.

Playing with all these guys is like riding in a Ferrari one day and in a Lamborghini the next. I'm spoiled. No drummer problems here.

MD: What *would* be a drummer problem?

Steve: A musical problem occurs when drummers feel that they're always right, when they take the attitude of, "I know what's going on here."

MD: How do you deal with a situation where something doesn't feel right to you from the drums, but you're not the leader?

Steve: I'd personally deal directly with that drummer. I can generally find a way to play with anybody. I'm more or less an after-the-fact responder. On the other hand, Andy Fusco—my colleague in Buddy's Buddies—is a post-bop player. He has very strong opinions about the kind of drummers he likes to play with. I might be looking for something different, and another horn player might be looking for something different yet. You can't really put it into words. It's just a matter of the comfort you feel being carried by these people, by the cushion they provide. The safer you feel, the more you're going to let yourself go. That feeling of safety can come right away, or it can come with time. And sometimes it never comes at all, even with the best players. There has to be that magic, which is simply undefinable.

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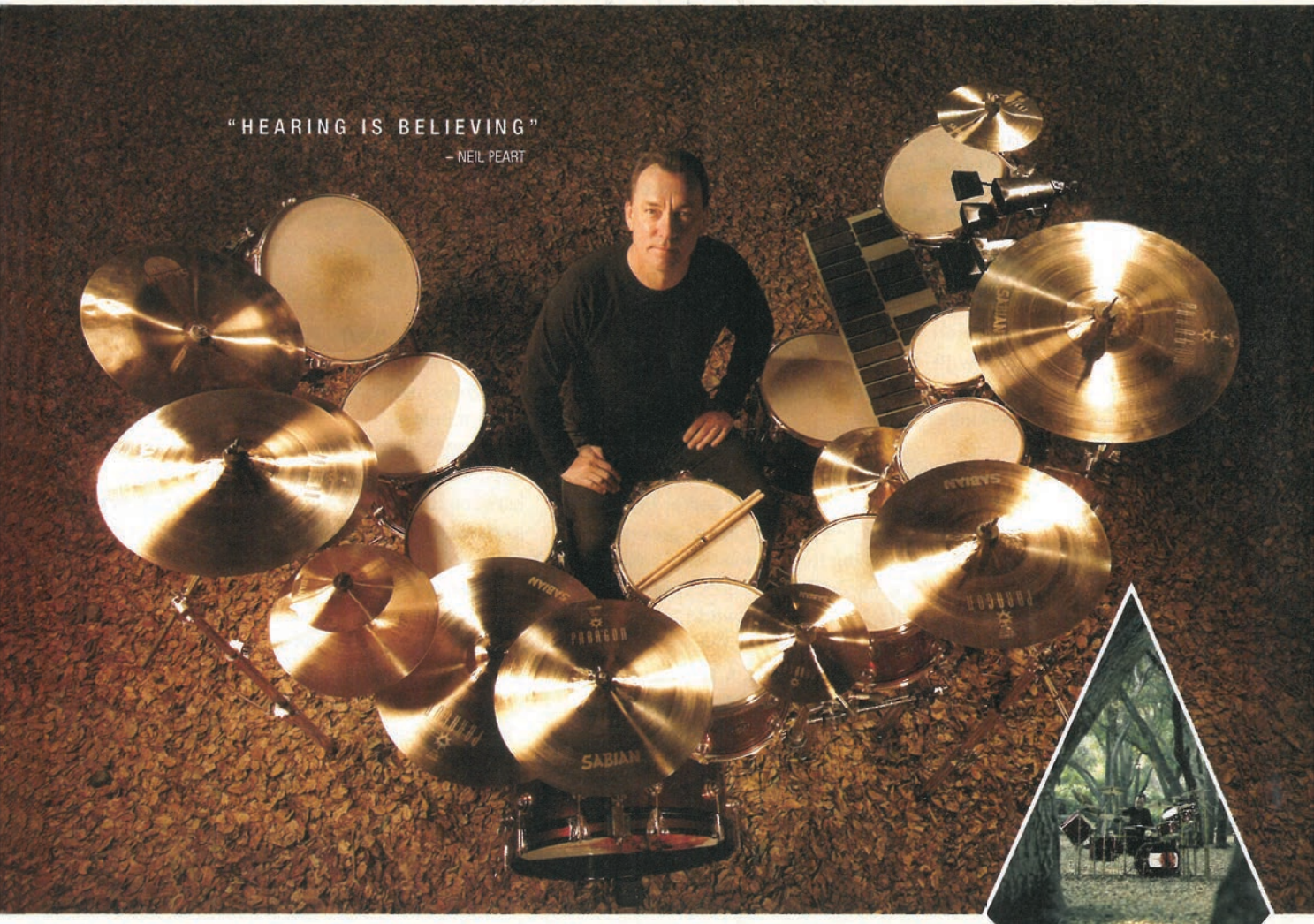

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Get More Gigs!

12 Networking Do's And Don'ts

by Robin Tolleson

Some drummers, when faced with the prospect of getting "out in the market" and selling themselves, have a tendency to get all sweaty and curl up into a fetal position on the couch. But the fact is that networking—the process of getting to know other musicians who, in their own desire to reach the top, might help you along the way—isn't such a bad thing. In fact, when it's done in the right spirit, networking can be beneficial to all concerned. It can also lead to some great music.

Let's face it: It's virtually impossible for a drummer to have a musically satisfying (or financially sufficient) career as a solo artist. Finding people to play with is crucial. With that in mind, here are twelve "do's and don'ts" to help you with your networking efforts.

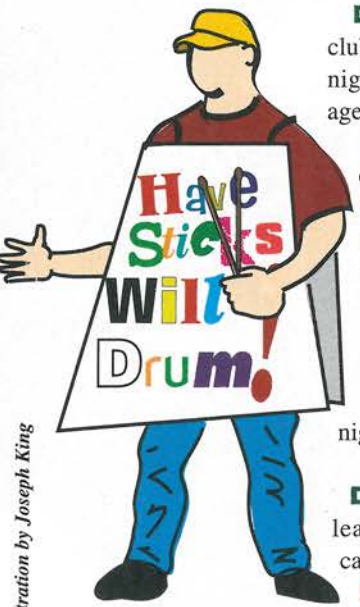

Illustration by Joseph King

Do investigate the local open-mic'/jam nights at clubs near you. Find a good jazz and/or blues talent night, and you'll likely meet many players of all ages who are looking for a new musical situation.

Don't show up on a scene, be it in New York or Knoxville, expecting the world to offer you a gig on your good looks, or fishing for compliments, or generally being a pest. Contrary to what you might think, it's not all about you.

Do find out what kind of music is featured at popular venues.

Don't go to a singer-songwriter open-mic' night expecting to find a drumkit.

Do take your own drumsticks to a jam. It's the least you can do, yet it's all you need in most cases.

Don't go to a jam night where drums are provided and take up time by switching to your own cymbals, snare, and bass drum pedal when it's your turn to play. It's better to play the house drums as close to the way they were initially set up as possible, moving only what is absolutely necessary. When you're finished playing, quickly re-adjust anything that you *did* move back to its previous position.

Do play with as many different types of performers as possible at a jam session, including horn players, vocalists, and rhythm sections. You'll learn more, and you'll become known as a versatile drummer who has knowledge of many different styles.

Don't disrespect someone else's music in a desire to show off your own talents. If you spray drum fills all over some vocalist's sensitive lyrics, it's going to make everyone look bad—especially you.

Do take a positive attitude along with you when you go networking. If you come off like a jaded, mercenary musician, you'll lose points with potential bandmates.

Don't oversell yourself. Telling a bunch of musicians right off the bat that you're a cross between Buddy Rich and Dennis Chambers is going to produce the kind of buzz that you don't want.

Do have business cards made up, and take them with you when you go out. It will save you the time and embarrassment of trying to find a pen to write your information on a cocktail napkin.

Don't be so presumptuous as to start passing out business cards unless you're asked for them.

It's virtually impossible for a drummer to sustain a career as a solo artist. Finding people to play with is crucial.

Do check out colleges and universities near you. You'll find young players who are eager to grow musically, who are willing to rehearse, and who are not yet too jaded to consider taking their equipment out of the house to a gig. Put a note on a bulletin board in the music building explaining what kind of musicians you're looking for.

Don't try to move into their dorm room when your girlfriend kicks you out.

Do support your local musical-instrument store (including financially), and spend time hanging out there. You can often meet other players or get connected through that scene. It can be kind of like the old-time barbershop used to be—a social meeting place. Pin up a business card on the store's bulletin board, and get to know the owner and the employees so that they can offer your name if someone asks them for a referral.

Don't use the music store as a stage for your immense talents. You can lose respect quickly if you're "auditioning" all day long at high volume levels.

Do find some local music venues that feature the kind of music that you play. Show the management that you're serious, and they might keep their ears open for like-minded musicians.

Don't expect free admission because you are "in the industry," and don't become known as a shark by trying to unseat drummers in established bands. Instead, develop a network of friends who can help each other.

Do put a brief advertisement of your talents in your local arts and entertainment magazine. Usually this costs next to nothing, and serious musicians often glance through.

Don't get overly creative in your ad. Keep it simple and honest. "Ringo seeks John, Paul, and George" might confuse people.

Do take advantage of networking possibilities offered by the Internet. Chat rooms on nightclub, instrument manufacturer, or band sites can be helpful in finding like-minded musicians. Create an attractive presence with your own site, if possible.

Don't take for absolute truth someone's email assertion that they are the next Jimi Hendrix or John Coltrane. Check them out in person before committing to any projects.

Do learn to be nice to other drummers. It can mean work for you.

Don't let jealousy or envy keep you from striking up a friendship (okay...schmoozing) with well-respected drummers in your area who might recommend you when they hear of an opportunity or need a sub.

MD *contributing writer Robin Tolleson gigs actively in the West Coast and Southeast music scenes with Hipbones, Big Block Dodge, Ruby Slippers, Klarcnova, and Gregory James. He has also been house drummer for weekly jazz & blues open-mic' nights at Teressa's in Asheville, North Carolina for the past two years.*

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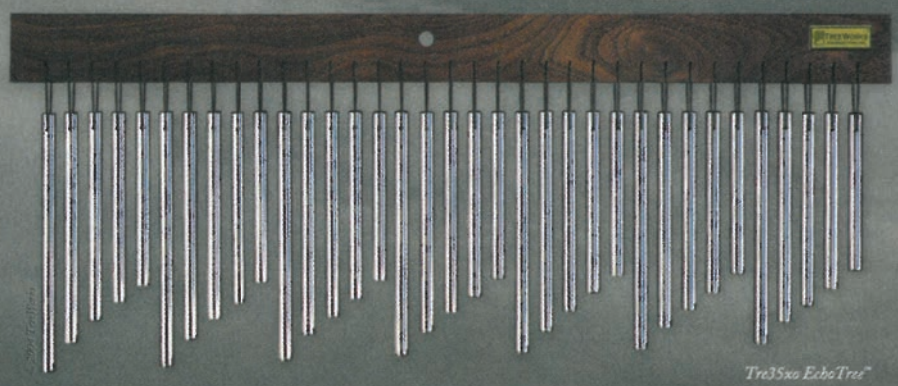

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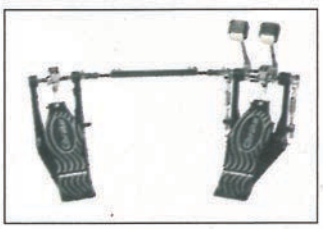

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FROM THE **PAST**

Shadow Wilson

Jazz's "Mr. Natural"

by Burt Korall

Rossiere "Shadow" Wilson (1919–59) "was the best natural drummer I ever heard," according to the legendary Papa Jo Jones. A careful evaluator of talent not prone to unequivocal comments of this sort, the great drummer found in Wilson a unique, triumphant, almost perfect talent for drums and for jazz. Ironically, though Wilson is warmly remembered by older musicians, jazz critics, and fans, the young know little or nothing about him.

In a rare interview in the March 1942 issue of *Music & Rhythm*, Wilson told a reporter that he had studied drums, beginning in 1934 at the age of fifteen. But Audrey Wilson, his widow, contends, "Shadow was self-taught. He worked out how and what he played by himself."

It is known that Wilson listened to all kinds of drummers every chance he got. He particularly admired those who had great stick control and dexterity. His personal idol was the great Chick Webb. Like Webb, Shadow did much to liberate and modernize jazz drumming. In a very *natural* way—and that is the key descriptive—he enlarged the playing field for drummers, while inventing fresh ways to enhance the musical impact of big and small bands and their soloists. Had he not fallen victim to heroin relatively early in his career, who can tell what he might have become. Still, he left behind a memorable musical legacy.

The native Philadelphian's gifts were apparent from the outset. His association with organist Bill Doggett was crucial to advancing his career. According to drummer Charlie Rice, who also worked with Doggett, "Bill had a band like Basie's—loose and swinging. If you came into a place where the band was working, you had to start tapping your feet and moving around right away. That's how Shadow affected everyone. When bandleader Lucky Millinder came to Philly looking for new players in '38 or '39, he was so impressed that he took the entire Doggett band back to New York. And Shadow went from there."

Wilson played in New York and on the road with Millinder. He also appeared with the band in a 1939 all-black gangster film musical, *Paradise In Harlem*, performing on the tune "I Gotta Put You Down."

A variety of leaders wanted to hire the drummer. Composer-arranger Jimmy Mundy documented his talent on record for the first time. In 1940, Wilson cut four sides with Mundy's band for Varsity: "Sunday Special," "All Aboard," "A Lover Is Blue," and "Little Old Lady From Baltimore."

Wilson also brought buoyant pulsation to organizations led by Benny Carter and Tiny Bradshaw, before joining Lionel Hampton. He made some small-group recordings with Hamp for RCA Victor, including an April 8, 1941 session of four

tunes: "Give Me Some Skin," "Now That You're Mine," "Chasin' With Chase" (featuring Hampton on drums), and "Three Quarter Boogie."

Because Shadow was with Hampton only from 1940 to 1941, and because of the AFM's record ban, he didn't record with Hamp's big band. Or so say the discographers. But Joe Newman, a member of the Hampton trumpet section, disputed this. He recalled Wilson being the drummer on "Flying Home," Hamp's biggest hit, which was out in May of 1942. "Shadow wasn't an outstanding solo drummer," said Newman. "But he didn't need to be, because the things he came up with behind the band and the soloists were more interesting than anything the drum soloists executed."

Wilson was with Earl Hines from 1941 to 1943. Dizzy, Bird, Sarah Vaughan, Billy Eckstine, and others with exploratory interests were stirring things up at the time. Wilson was just right for all this ferment. The drummer anticipated the rhythm and coloration of bebop. Indeed, he was responsible for devising the most appropriate responses to the music, without completely breaking with the rhythmic continuity of jazz's past.

Said Billy Eckstine, "Shadow was perfect for my band. It was organized for people like him. He came along for the first record date, but then he was called by Selective Service. Shadow was the best drummer I ever worked with."

The great jazz drummer and teacher Alan Dawson added this about Shadow's musical contribution: "He was a more pivotal character in the evolution of the music than most people thought—more, I'm sure, than even *he* realized. I can see the reason he was asked to do the Eckstine thing. His amazing ability to deal with all kinds of music immediately recommended him."

During the Hines years (and later as well), Wilson kept turning up at small band sessions uptown in Harlem, to play experimental music with like-minded players. Roy Haynes was working the same scene at that time.

"Shadow was a natural drummer," says Roy. "What killed me about him was that he took things beyond rudiments and expressed himself in a way that was relaxed and musical. So many drummers were into rudimental excellence—sometimes for its own sake. Shadow was going another way. He didn't sound like the drummers with great hands who practiced out of books and studied hard. He kept things interesting. But most impor-

tant for me, he made *music*. I was intrigued by his whole concept."

In 1944, Wilson became a member of the Georgie Auld band, which blended elements of Basie, Barnet, and bebop. Shadow then spent a short time with Louis Jordan's commercial jump band, after which he subbed briefly for Jo Jones with the Basie band. His big opportunity came when Jones was drafted later that year.

The Basie ensemble was in the process of great change. A number of new players were brought into the band. Wilson was the glue that held it together, as well as being the provocateur who kept the aggregation in high gear.

Basie records and broadcasts made in 1944 and 1945 tell the Shadow Wilson story very well. The performances have an edge and a great sense of immediacy that reveal the innovation and quality of Wilson's work. His time feel is enhanced by crackling accents delivered by a liberated, acute left hand—often in combination with his bass drum. What he plays is unaffected, but with an explosiveness that is central to his style.

Shadow's performances are heightened by bold stroke combinations and lead-ins to sectional figures and ensemble passages. No one, with the possible exception of Buddy Rich, could set up a band in such a spirited, inventive, savage way.

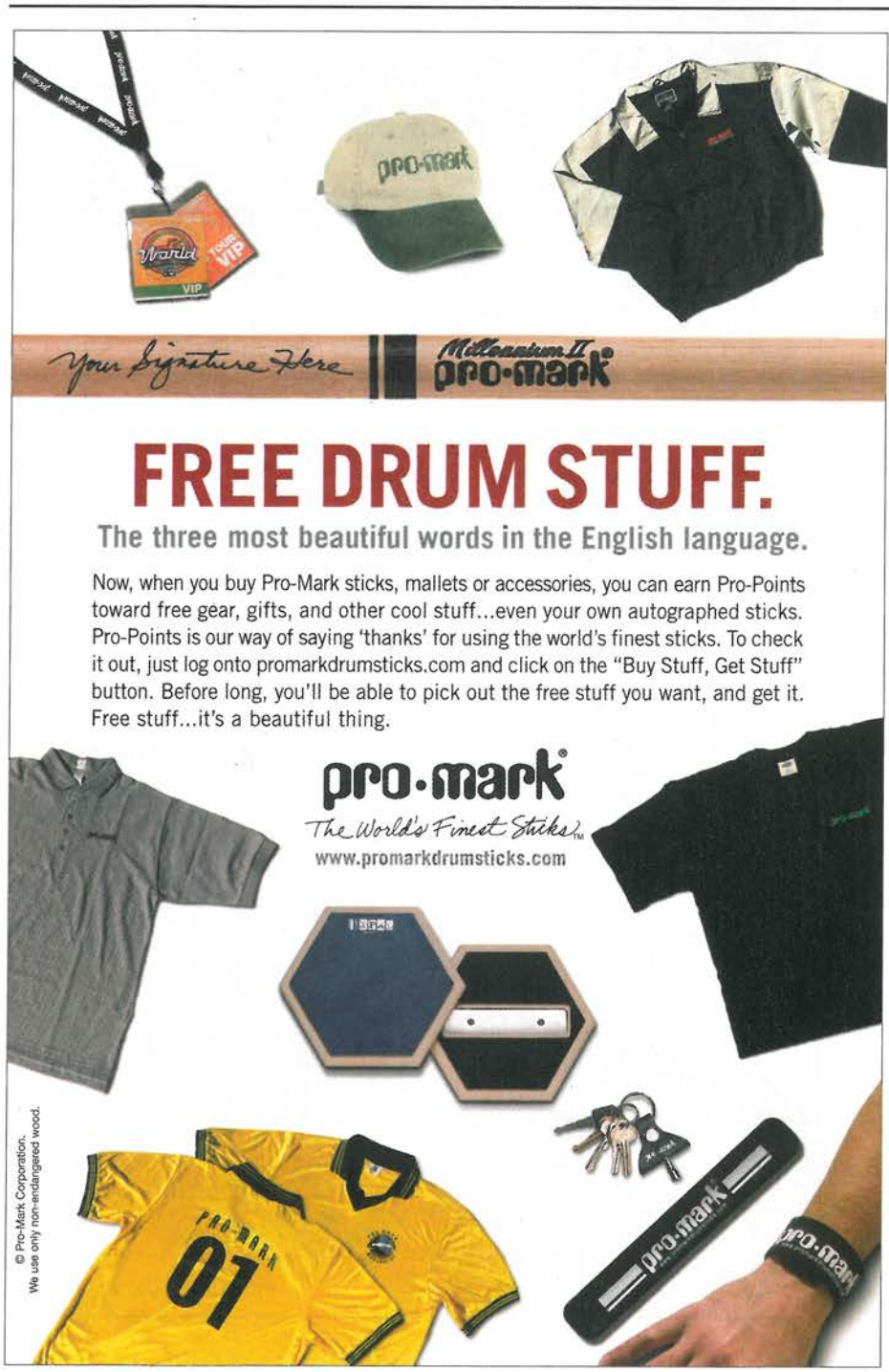
Shadow was also the first drummer to tie together all elements of an arrangement in such a muscular, venturesome manner. He viewed and treated a chart as a whole piece, and did all he could to make a performance a complete story in music. In doing so, he constantly forced the issue in the rhythm section and throughout the entire band. The musicians *had* to go with him—not in the sense of "do this or else," but because he made his direction the only feasible way to go.

Shadow's way of tuning the drums also contributed to the impression he made. His snare, tuned comparatively tight with a bit of a ring to it, mixed well with the bass drum sound, which was tuned between a thud and the natural sound of the drum. The two tomtoms added contrasting sonorities.

Shadow Wilson's masterpiece is unquestionably the impossibly perfect, climactic two-bar double-time turnaround on the October 9, 1945 Basie recording of Jimmy Mundy's "Queer Street." The sticking and accentuation, the feel and concentration, and the intensity and power are pure Shadow Wilson. Widely considered the best drum break in the history of big band jazz, it's simply inspiring.

"What Shadow played is not just a solo," said sax great Gerry Mulligan. "That musical comment came from someplace and went somewhere. It connects elements in the chart. Listen to what Sweets Edison plays on his horn during his sixteen bars and what Shadow plays out of it. The continuity is seamless. They're both skating on top of the time and pulling it forward, all the while thinking ahead to what's going to happen."

Shadow stayed with Basie only until Jo Jones reclaimed his job. In 1945 he got a call to fill in for Dave Tough with Woody Herman's First Herd, at the Panther Room of the Hotel Sherman in Chicago. Later, he played with unusual verve, fire, and invention in Illinois Jacquet's little big band. Jacquet loved him and kept him working fairly regularly between 1946 and 1954. In return, Wilson brought something very special to this blues-based, emotionally rendered, swinging music. He played as only he could when straight-ahead thrust was a



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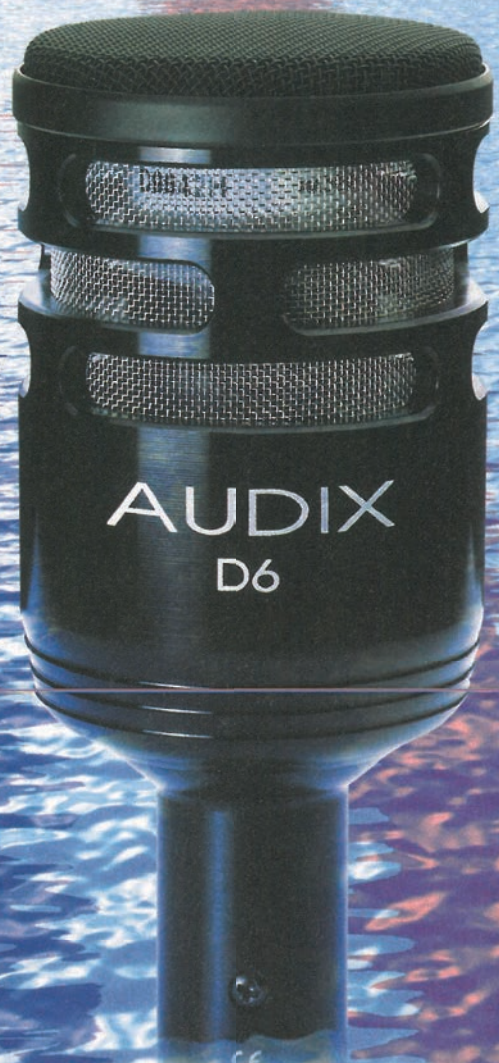

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band's central concern, mingling vivid, gritty pulsation with the sort of subtle touches that had identified his work from the beginning of his career.

Wilson recorded with a variety of people, ranging over many styles. These included Thelonious Monk and Lester Young. Always he became an organic part of the group and the music, responding with fitting rhythm and ornamentation.

Wilson reacted to the subtleties of interior music with the same discernment and taste he had brought to the exterior, open, blues-infused music of Basie and Jacquet. In 1947, he excelled with pianist-composer-arranger Tadd Dameron and a group of modern, young lions, including trumpeter Fats Navarro. That year he was voted an *Esquire* magazine "New Star" (along with, among others, Miles Davis).

Wilson was asked by Basie to come back in September of 1948. He played with the band at the Royal Roost on Broadway for a month, before going on to Woody Herman's Second Herd. But Shadow was with the Herman band only briefly. For the first time, the great drummer failed to do what was expected of him. "Shadow played good," said Woody Herman, "but he was getting pretty far out [on drugs]. It wasn't him, but what he was into."

Shadow Wilson's masterpiece is unquestionably the impossibly perfect, climactic two-bar double-time turnaround on the Basie recording of "Queer Street."

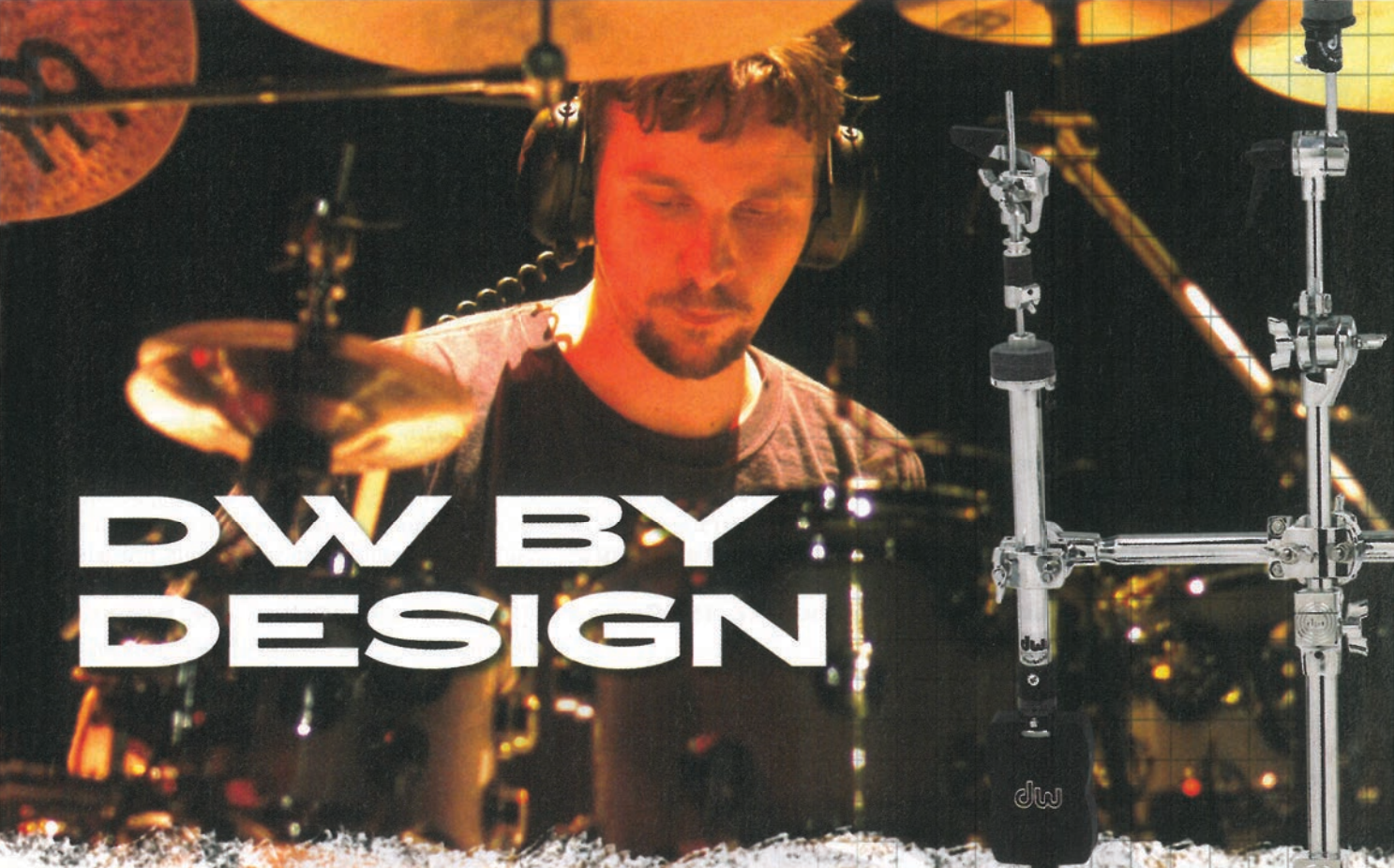
The final ten years of Shadow Wilson's life continued a pattern of good performances offset by increasing addiction. The drummer appeared with Ella Fitzgerald, Illinois Jacquet, Sonny Stitt, an Earl Hines small band, and the Oscar Pettiford Big Band. And over a two-year period, he was a member of pianist Erroll Garner's trio.

Drummer Phil Brown was with Roy Eldridge's big band at the Apollo Theater in 1951. "What I remember about that week-long engagement," he says, "was Shadow in Erroll's trio. He used only brushes—so very sensitively—and brought into play all kinds of imaginative ideas with both feet. What he did with his hi-hat foot—the various open, semi-open, and closed combinations—was very hip. He punctuated the music better than anyone I had ever heard. The guy always touched me as a player, and as a person."

Many of the people who admired Wilson cared a great deal about him. Others felt sorry for him, or were offended by what he brought upon himself and others. There were stories of brutality, desperation, continuing illness, and, finally, death from transversal meningitis.

"I saw Shadow shortly before he passed in 1959," recalls drum great Louie Bellson. "He came backstage at the Apollo. I was there with Pearl [Bailey] and our big band. He looked so bad and was in such terrible shape. I didn't recognize him. He said, 'Lou, don't you know me? I'm Shadow.' It was very sad."

Sad, indeed. But Shadow Wilson's work tells us all we *really* have to know about him. It defines who he was and what he meant to the music of his time.



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Fantastic Finishes

by Harry Cangany

Most of my *Collectors' Corner* articles have featured vintage snare drums. The emphasis has been on the model or the manufacturer. This story certainly features photos of specific models from brand-name companies. But the focus is on fantastic finishes of the past—specifically from the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Sample finishes from top: Rogers Fiesta Pearl, Slingerland Gold Veil, and Ludwig Oyster Black.

First, let me quote the second issue of *Leedy Drum Topics*, which was the "house" magazine published by the Leedy Drum Company. It was dated October 15, 1923. In a paragraph titled "Times Have Changed," Leedy designer George Way wrote, "Ten years ago we never saw white, black, and gold drums. Neither was it customary to engrave a snare drum shell. But now they are to be seen quite frequently. Of course, there is a good reason for this, and underneath it all is good sound business judgement. Regardless of what some drummers may think, it is true that the fellow with the fancy finished outfit is the fellow who is pulling down the big money...."

Even back in the '20s, image was a big part of being a drummer. That has certainly carried through to the present day, where we see custom finishes of virtually every description. However, along the way a few unique finishes were discontinued. You may think that was done for good reason, or you may join me in thinking that some of them should be brought back. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, after all.

Champagne Sparkle

This Rogers Dyna-Sonic boasts a color that was popular in the '50s and '60s, but disappeared in the 1970s. There is a current champagne sparkle available, but it's a "washed out" version of the real thing. That new champagne (also known as Bermuda Sand) is attractive, but its 50/50 copper and silver sparkle mix just pales next to the original, which was 75% copper and 25% silver. Back in 1964 my drum teacher told me that he wouldn't let me order champagne sparkle because I'd get tired of it. Some thirty years later I still love that color, and I have Gretsch, Ludwig, and Rogers sets in it.

Slingerland Black Sparkle

This Slingerland Radio King snare is finished in a black wrap with purple sparkles. Later versions of Black Sparkle were black with gold sparkles or with bigger lavender sparkles. But the original was *very* striking; it's a shame it was discontinued.

Gretsch Diamond Sparkle

To celebrate its 75th anniversary in 1958, Gretsch brought out Diamond Sparkle finish.

(Ludwig called the same finish Galaxy or Black Galaxy.) The "standard" color is black with gold sparkles, but there are some drums that seem to have silver sparkles.

Rogers Mardi Gras And Fiesta

Drums finished in black with a multi-colored confetti pattern were known as Mardi Gras. The same pattern over a white background was called Fiesta. Slingerland also used both. These finishes were fun; why have we gotten so conservative?

Other Great Finishes

Slingerland offered an interesting finish called Capri, which reminds me of tadpoles swimming among gold lines. And then there was Gold Veil: a black fin-

How To Repair Cracks In Ludwig Vistalite Drums

by Ned Ingberman

While not a painted or covered "fantastic finish," the distinctive look of Ludwig's Vistalite drums has always been a large part of their appeal. Original Ludwig Vistalites have been desirable items on the vintage market for several years. But acrylic drums are back in a big way today, from a number of manufacturers. So the following information is valid for new drums as well as old.

A company known as Cadillac Plastics during the 1970s and '80s produced the acrylic material for Ludwig's Vistalite drums. Today, that company is called GE Polymershapes. In addition to being a manufacturer and distributor of plastic material and products, they offer a line of special glues for repairing cracks and breaks in acrylic plastic.

The glue, made under the brand name of Weldon, comes in three different viscosities. Weldon 3 has a watery consistency and penetrates into hairline cracks. It molecularly bonds (melts) plastic together and permanently seals the crack. Weldon 5 has the consistency of syrup, and is used for joining together breaks. Weldon 10 has the consistency of honey. It's also used for joining together breaks.

Weldon 3 and 5 are clear and colorless; Weldon 10 has an opaque cast and therefore is best used where it would be least conspicuous, such as on dark-colored or opaque Vistalites, or for re-joining unglued seams. Before using these products, be sure to read the directions and precautions concerning proper ventilation and application. GE Polymershapes can be reached at (800) 274-1000, or at www.gepolymershapes.com.

Of course, the best way to repair cracks is to prevent them from happening in the first place. So here's a tip: If you remove lug casings or mounts from your acrylic drums, be very careful when re-mounting them. Tighten the screws and bolts just enough to be *slightly* snug, but not any more. Overtightening can cause hairline cracks in the shell around the perimeter of the mounting holes.

As the owner of Vintage Drum Center (www.vintagedrum.com), Ned Ingberman has extensive experience in the repair and restoration of vintage drum equipment. •

One of the most asked questions by drummers?

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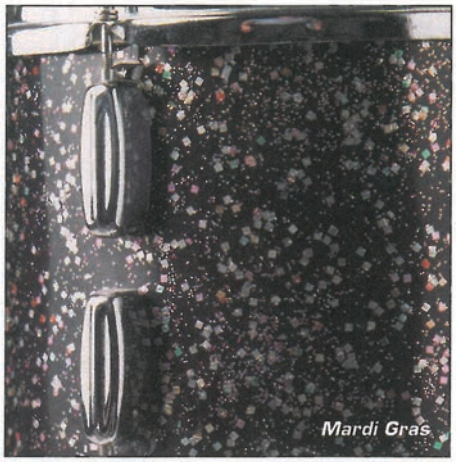
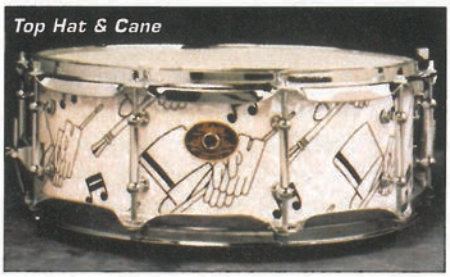
ish with a gold, net-like grid over it that I find very attractive. Slingerland also had Silver Veil and Turquoise Veil, which were similar in design but had a dominant color.


Mardi Gras

Besides today's Bermuda Sand as a Champagne Sparkle replacement, I'd like to point out that there are two other retro finishes currently available. Each is an approximation of its former shade, and I hope that the next batch to be released is a true copy. Ludwig's original '60s "Ringo" finishes—Oyster Blue and Oyster Black—were translucent streaks of color with one predominant tint (blue or black) and a marvelous pearlescence.

Capri


Top Hat & Cane

The reissues, though nice, are not quite as dark and not as "pearly." But the latest versions are the best so far.

In a future article, we'll go forward into the unique finishes of the 1970s—especially some of the psychedelic looks. But for now, we'll take one step *backwards*. The years prior to the '50s and '60s had their funky-to-classic colors and designs, too. These included Sea Green, Autographs Of The Stars, and the legendary Top Hat & Cane shown here. Drum restorer Jack Lawton has had that graphic reproduced on backgrounds of white pearl and Bermuda Sand.

For more information on drum finishes, pick up Rob Cook's *Drum Colors* book (Rebeats Vintage Drum Products, www.rebeats.com). In it you'll find the colors and finishes I've described, along with dozens more. Rare and glitzy finishes should add 10% to 15% to the value of any vintage drum. So go save one today!

I'd like to close this article with my thanks to Cherie Willoughby and Dave Louvorn for their help. Finding pristine drawn-brass lugs for the Rogers Mardi Gras...now *there* was a project.

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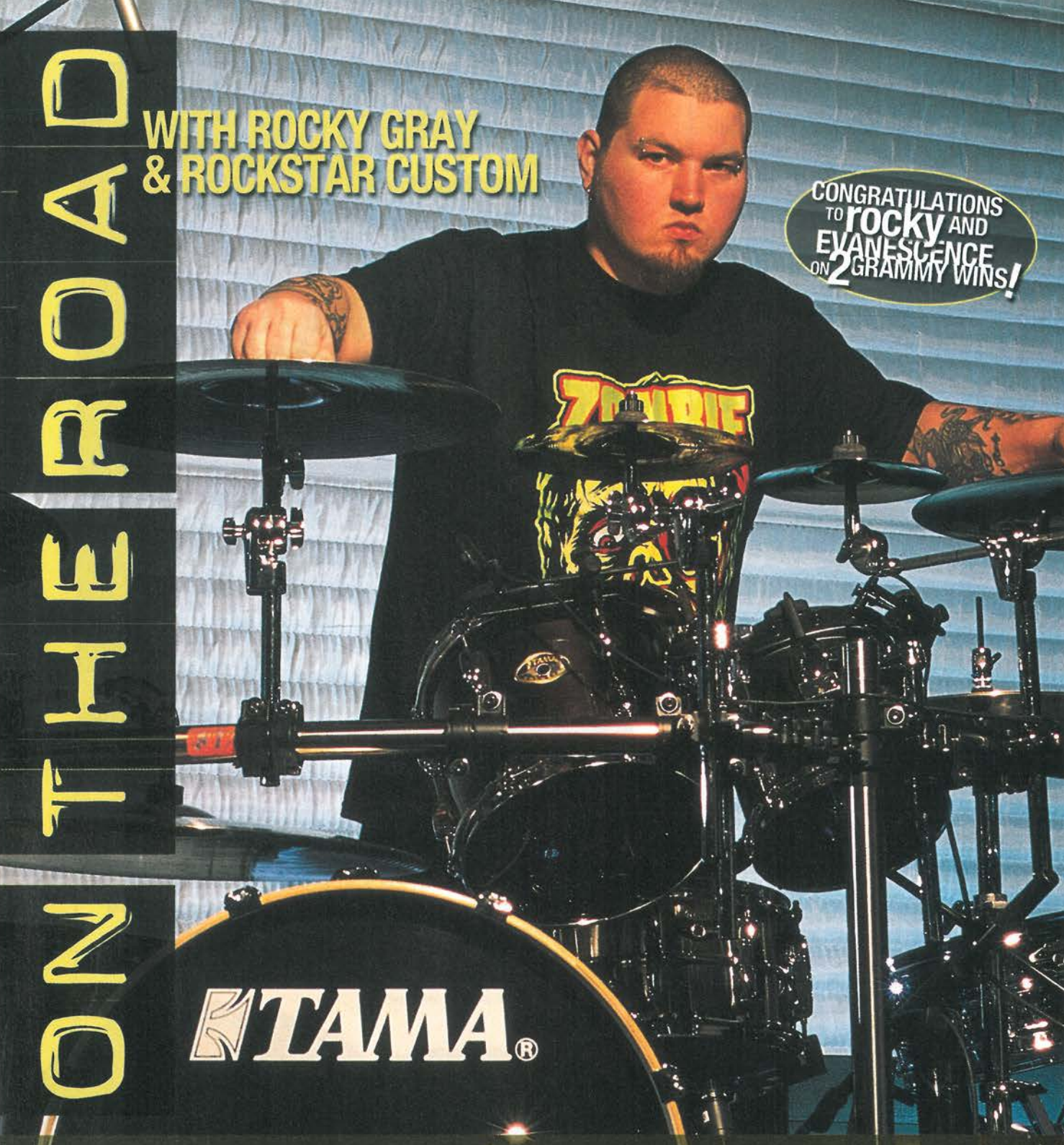

Rocky Gray of Evanescence picked up a Rockstar Custom kit for rehearsals and a few gigs where it wasn't practical to ship his Starclassic Maple kit. "I thought I'd be the guy to actually take Rockstar Custom on a pro-tour," laughed the Evanescence drummer. "But the kit really blew peoples minds. When they see it on stage where everything is bigger than life, they're going, 'Man, that is awesome!'" Okay, so Rockstar Custom looks good. How about the sound? "The drums are real punchy, a really full sound. My front of house guy is totally impressed. Economically, this is the best kit you can play on."

So as it turns out, Rocky will use his double kick Starclassic for most shows, and the Rockstar Custom with an Iron Cobra double pedal for other shows. "When you play the same songs for a year, switching the kits keeps things interesting. When it's exciting for me, the audience can feel it and the excitement translates to them, too."

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ROCKSTAR CUSTOM FINISHES

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purple pHaze

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Rockstar Custom is available in ten lacquer finishes including Rocky Gray's own Custom Charcoal finish and three fade finishes, Purple pHaze, Custom Caramel Fade, and Custom Mahogany Fade. Tama's new Rockstar Custom EFX is available in two different Duracover finishes for a more vintage look, more shell protection and a very slightly darker tone.

ROCKSTAR CUSTOM EFX FINISHES

snow white pearl

dark blue abalone

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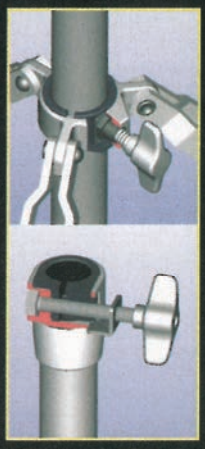
Look at the whole set before you put down your hard-earned bucks. With some kits, you get decent drums, but disappointing hardware. With Rockstar you get great drums AND Roadpro hardware – the same professional-grade stands used by Tama pros.

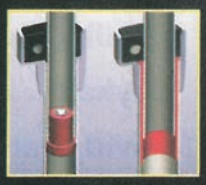


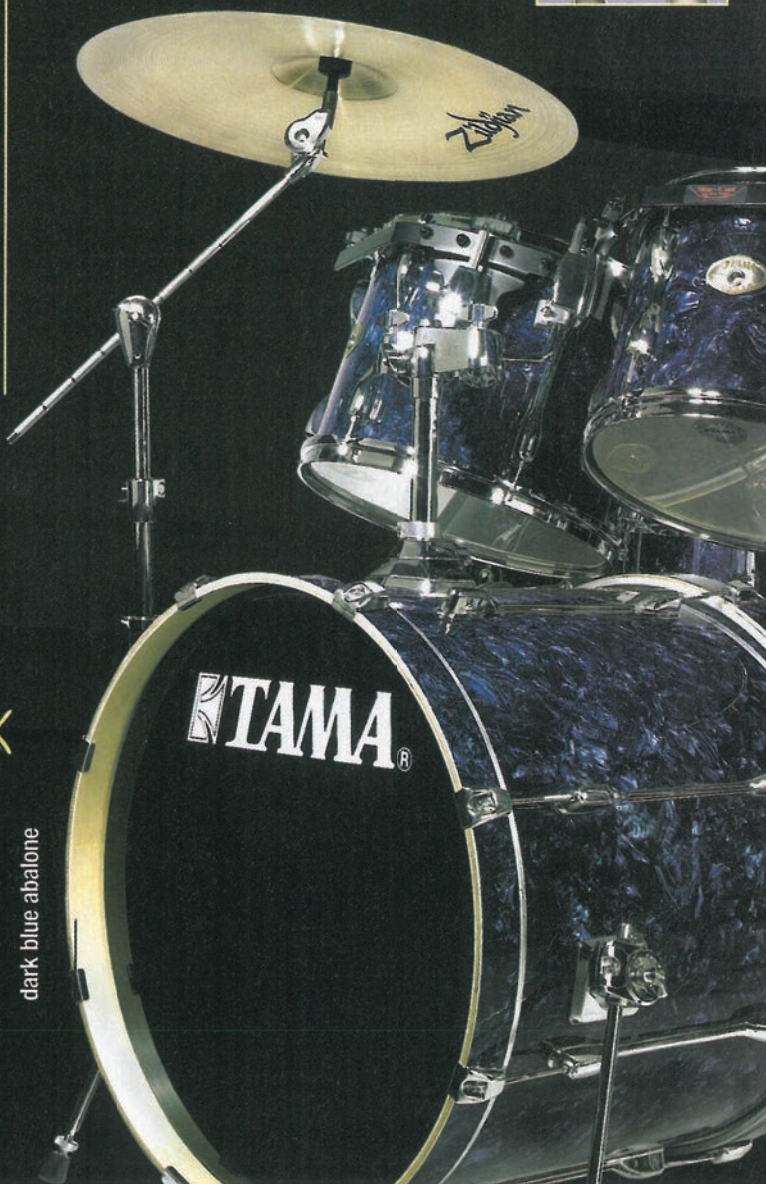
Basic Construction

Heavy-duty Roadpro stands feature adjustment t-bolts that are tightened into extra-hard steel inserts. Which makes Roadpro stands much less prone to stripping than ordinary stands that feature t-rods that are tightened directly into the stand joints.

Nylon bushings on each t-nut bolt makes the replacement of worn bolts or bushings fast and easy.

No swaying! Special rubber caps in the upper tube and base section make Roadpro much more stable than ordinary heavy-duty stands.



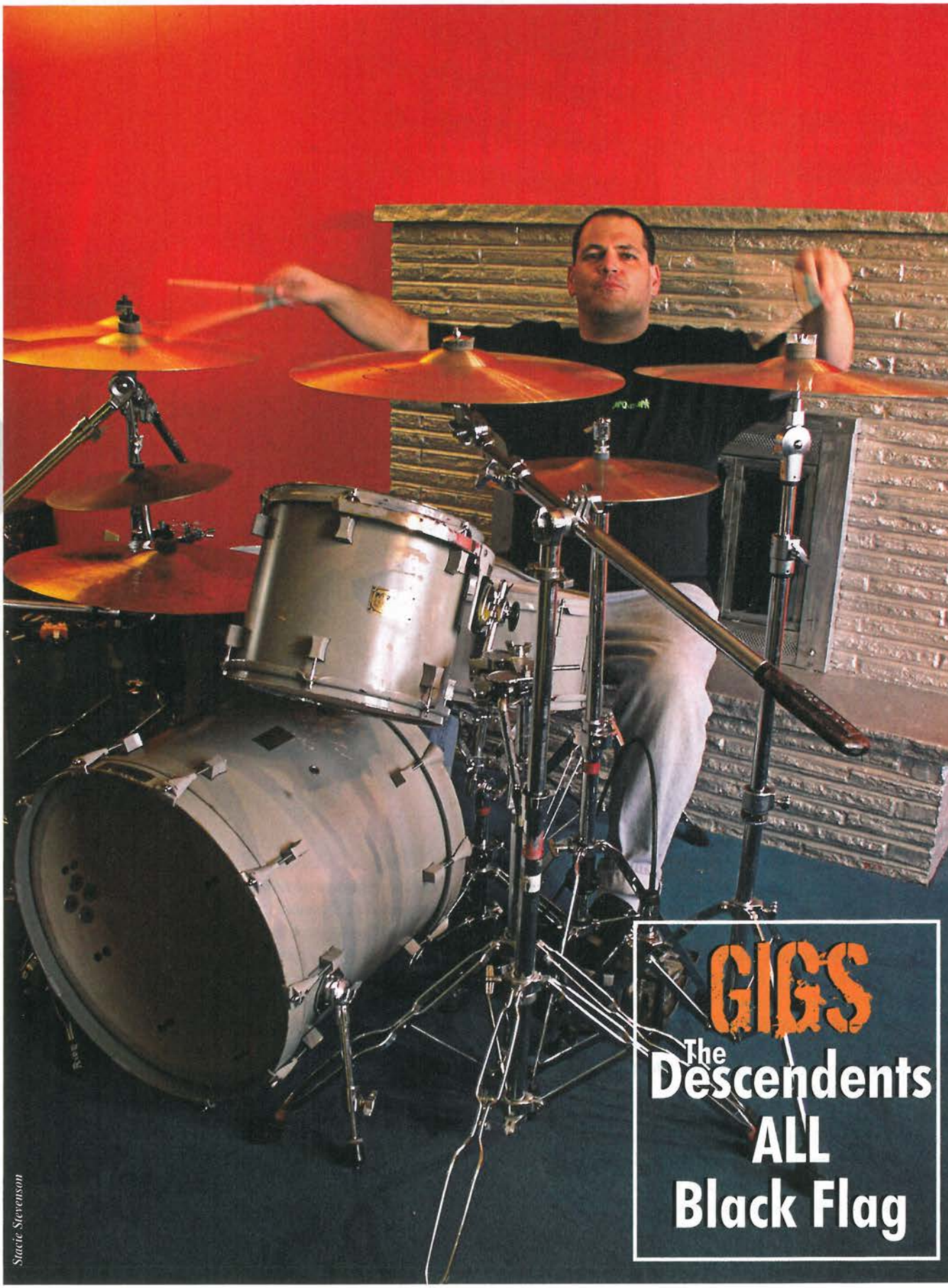


Bill Stevenson

★ PUNK ★ INSPIRATION ★

by Waleed Rashidi

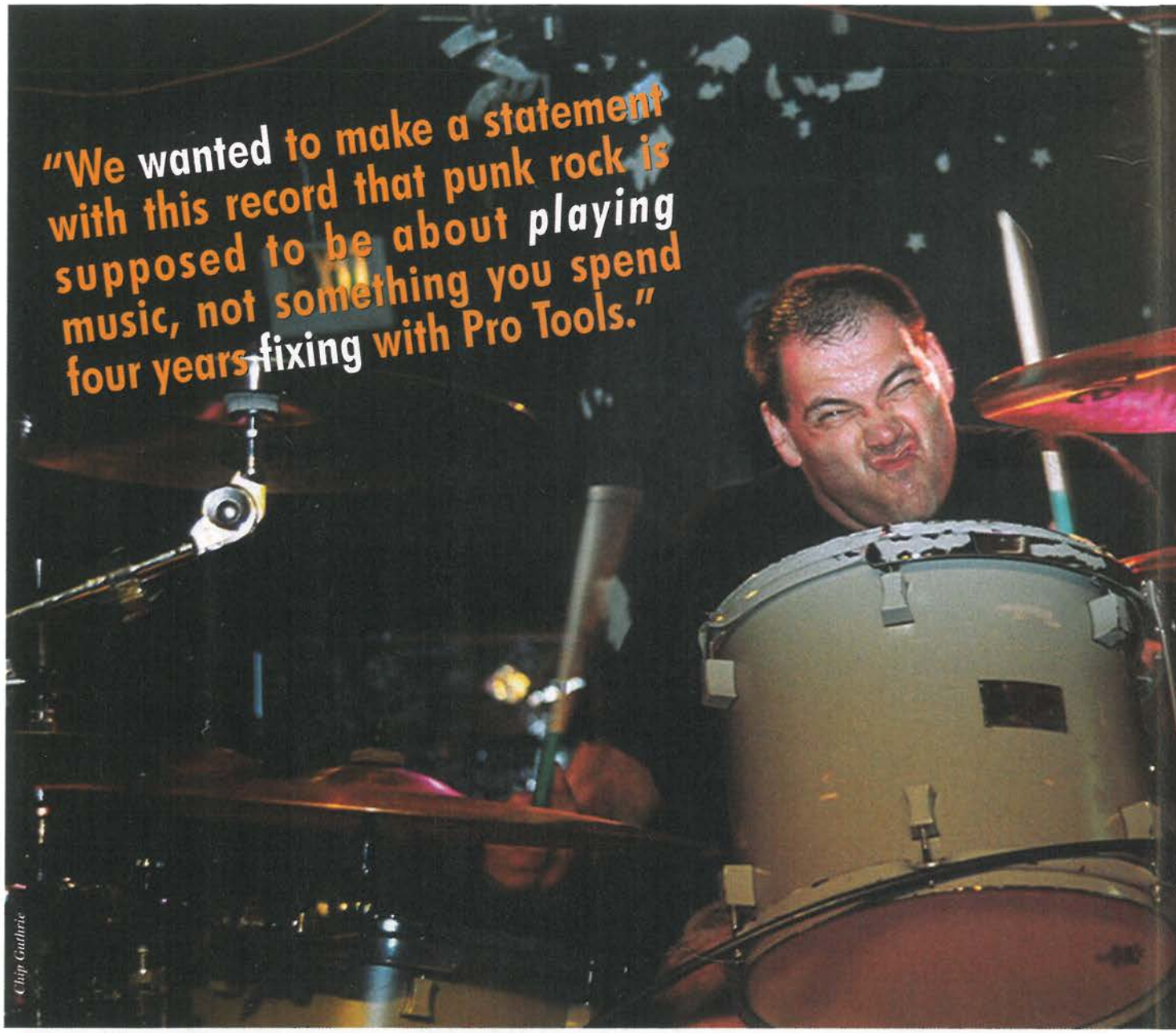
Blink-182, New Found Glory, Simple Plan, The Ataris—all wildly successful pop-punk bands of the present, and all with a uniting influence worn proudly on their material: pop-punk torchbearers The Descendents. But The Descendents wouldn't have persisted—in fact, they wouldn't even exist—without drummer Bill Stevenson, who almost single-handedly laid the groundwork for today's pop-punk by taking the reins of the band.



GIGS

The Descendents
ALL
Black Flag

Stacie Stevenson



Stevenson's roots began on the beaches of Los Angeles, as a fishing hobbyist in high school. His hours on the pier soon became some of the earliest lyrical fodder for his scrappy little punk act, dubbed The Descendents, which formed back in 1978. Brief two-minute bursts about fishing, food, high school, and girls were set to simple melodic structures. The band was fronted by a vocalist named Milo Aukerman and backed by Stevenson's sure-fire, self-proclaimed "caffeinated surf beats," which he says were influenced by early punk drummers like Jack Reynolds of The Last, John McCarthy of The Alley Cats, and Robo of Black Flag.

When The Descendents went on hiatus in the early '80s, Stevenson answered the call of Black Flag, who needed an immediate drummer replacement. Stevenson toured with the outfit and performed on a number of the band's albums, including *Slip It In, My War,* and *Live '84.* However, The Descendents would soon return, refining their sound over the course of a couple of albums and distilling the once novel, simplistic pop-punk format into a highly palatable presentation.

With the departure of Aukerman in 1987, The Descendents went on hiatus again. But Stevenson, along with guitarist Stephen Egerton and bassist Karl Alvarez, kept the music coming by forming ALL. Aided by a series of vocalists, the group forged ahead with their trademark pop-punk, releasing several records and relentlessly touring the nation, despite the relative unpopularity of their genre at the time. "I don't consider myself to be some great innovator," Stevenson says humbly. "I just consider our band to be part of a musical continuum where we've taken influences as well as given them. I think what we did was create a clever fusion of some of our different influences that maybe people hadn't heard before, at least not quite in that way."

Stevenson recently completed the band's latest album, *Cool To Be You,* with Egerton and longtime engineer Jason Livermore, at his Fort Collins, Colorado–based recording studio, The Blasting Room. That's where *Modern Drummer* caught up with the living legend, who gladly talked about his recent musical endeavors, as well as his over a quarter century of extraordinary punk drumming, production, and songwriting experience.

MD: So how come it's taken The Descendents eight years to release another full-length?

Bill: Long story short, The Descendents have always basically been a part-time thing, with the exception of a few brief periods where we did some extensive touring. Other than those two periods, Descendents has been a hobby, although the increasing notoriety or legendary status wouldn't indicate that. So we just kind of do a record whenever we have the time and interest to do it, and a lot of that is specifically predicated on Milo's availability. He's a biochemist working on trying to advance the growing of corn in ways that I'm not quite scientific enough to explain. And he's really obsessed about his science work the way the other three of us are about music. So consequently, the three of us have done ten albums as the band ALL, which featured other singers.

MD: What was the initial spark or inspiration to do another Descendents record?

Bill: From a timing standpoint, I think it went kind of like this: We were between ALL albums and Milo was between jobs, and we tried to sneak in and record an album quickly. Of course, it ended up taking us two and a half years to do it, during our spare time. It didn't take a *full* two and a half years. It's not like we did a Def Leppard record or something. [laughs] We just did it in concentrated spurts of maybe a week at a time.

MD: You've always gravitated towards more of a live feel on your albums. From a producer's standpoint, was that part of the master vision on *Cool To Be You*?

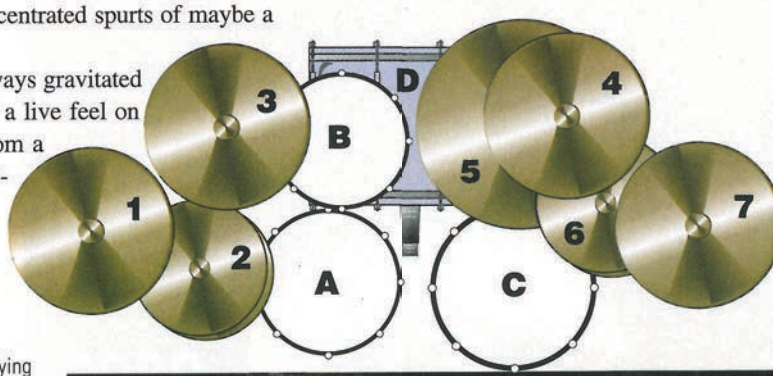
Bill: The tendency for us has been evolving in the direction of doing less punching, less overdubbing, and less phony-baloney. On this new record, the music was played live simultaneously by the three of us. There's not even a doubled guitar part. There are a few things that were added, like a guitar solo here and there. But by and large we played the album live.

In keeping with that methodology, the way jazz records would've been done, you do three or four takes, and maybe edit together the better moments from the takes. So it's not like we played it perfectly one time through and moved to the next song. But the fact is that the three of us were all playing at the same time, with very little overdubbing. Then the vocals were done in Delaware, where Milo lives.

MD: What's the main goal behind trying to perform live in the studio?

Bill: To be honest, as players we just felt, Look, we're forty. Can't we just play together? Do we have to go through this anal, sterile process of "doing the drums," "let's use a metronome," blah, blah? It's like, come on, this is supposed to be music. It's supposed to be alive and breathing. And we're supposed to be playing *with* each other, not *to* each other.

Karl made the point that it's a totally dif-



★STEVENSON'S★GEAR★

Drums: Pork Pie in battleship grey finish
- **A.** 6x14 snare (8-ply maple)
- **B.** 10x13 rack tom
- **C.** 14x16 floor tom
- **D.** 18x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Paiste
1. 18" Signature medium crash
2. 14" Signature medium hi-hats
3. 18" Signature Fast crash
4. 18" Signature Fast crash
5. 22" 2002 Power ride
6. 15" Signature medium hi-hats (mounted on X-Hat)
7. 18" Signature Full crash

Hardware: Tama stands, Yamaha FT 9310 Flying Dragon bass drum pedal (with felt beater, very tight spring tension)

Heads: various Evans and Remo models

Sticks: Pro-Mark 747 Super Rock model (hickory with wood tip)

Microphones: For recent Descendents record, *Cool To Be You*: Shure SM57 on top of snare, Beyer M201 on bottom, Beyer M88 inside kick, Royer R121 outside, Shure SM81 on top of rack tom, Sennheiser 421 on bottom, Sennheiser 421 on top of floor tom, Shure KSM 32 on bottom, Neumann KM-184 on ride and hats, Schieps 221B with cardioid capsule for overheads, Audio-Technica 4033 in room

Coffee: dark Italian roast

Stacie Stevenson

★Point ★Of★ Impact★

Other Drummers On Stevenson

Dave Grohl
Foo Fighters, Probot, Nirvana

The Descendants' records were amazing. The band was so focused on songwriting and having that pop edge. They're probably the most influential band for all of this new wave of melodic punk-rock bands. The Descendants' *Milo Goes To College* is a pop masterpiece.

Bill Stevenson was just so snap quick, man. His hands were so fast. Speed up your Ramones records and you've got Bill Stevenson. But he also came up with really great parts. You can tell that he writes his parts as a songwriter, no: so much as a flashy drummer.

Bill looks like a pro wrestler. My favorite live footage of him is the Black Flag *Live '84* stuff. He's not a conventional punk rock drummer, and when he joined Black Flag, he got a little weirder and there was a slight hesitation and a pause to every hit. It made everything more dramatic. And Bill plays the drums heavier than most any other drummer I've seen without hitting them any harder than anyone else.

Travis Barker
Blink-182

Bill Stevenson was the first punk drummer I loved. He composed his drum parts in a way that was a song of their very own. He also wrote some of my favorite ALL and Descendents songs.

Josh Freese
A Perfect Circle, The Vandals, studio great

My friend Chris took me to see The Descerdents at the Whisky when I was about seventeen. He told me that their drummer was really good. I said, 'Uh...great...cool...yeah.' I didn't really pay attention to what he was telling me. But then, sure enough, Bill Stevenson was *awesome*. It was my first time seeing him play, and it was some of the best punk rock drumming I'd ever seen.

I was pleasantly surprised when I noticed that Bill also wrote some of my favorite Descendents songs like "Silly Girl" and "Clean Sheets." I also love the way the drums sound on those records—something really simple and cool about them. Bill's been an inspiration to me in more ways than one.

Chris Knapp
The Ataris

I'm lucky that Bill was not only a producer, but also an engineer on one of my earliest recording experiences in the studio. I can't begin to detail the tips and tricks he taught me during that recording process. That's another whole article in itself.

Cyrus Bolooki
New Found Glory

Bill would play the craziest rhythms and fills, and best of all, he would make it look so easy. I still find myself listening back to his approach and trying to apply those ideas to my own playing.

alchemy cymbals

there is a thin line between

good & bad

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BROOKS WACKERMAN
Bad Religion
Bill's ideas are very creative without interfering with the art. He's influenced me to try out different flavors behind the trapset.

ADRIAN YOUNG
No Doubt
The song "Suburban Home" is one example of really cool, tight, aggressive punk drumming. A lot of the punk guys back then were playing with attitude, but Bill was playing with attitude *and* powerful execution.

ferent thing to play with the drums rather than *to* drums that are already on tape. Because what he plays affects what I play. But if I've already laid down my tracks, he can't affect what I'm playing because I'm already on tape. There is a difference. There's more of a yin/yang or ebb and flow.

We also wanted to make some kind of statement with this record that punk rock is supposed to be about playing music, not something you spend four years fixing with Pro Tools.

MD: What were some of the challenges that you faced personally in performing a "live" tracking session?

Bill: One was a physical challenge, because I'm a forty-year-old guy playing in the style that I created when I was fifteen. That can be a little weird at times, especially trying to rise up to the required energy level. But other than that, we rehearsed so much that everybody knew what to do. The kind of music I've played most of my life is based upon the heart and energy of it, so the chops and technical side of things are probably fourth or fifth on the priority list.

MD: But you do exhibit a sizable degree of chops and technicality, particularly when compared to other drummers in your genre. Do you think it's perhaps more a consequence of what you're listening to than anything else?

Bill: One of the biggest influences on me is everything that happened between the period of Tony Williams and Billy Cobham. In other words, that time span in jazz/fusion from Miles Davis's *Four And More* all the way up to *Birds Of Fire* by The Mahavishnu Orchestra. That era changed my whole life. And that happened early on. I got into *Birds Of Fire* when I was eighteen, so here we were, basically in a Ramones-ish band, and I was trying to apply these different rhythms and things. Sometimes I found ways to insert more complex rhythms into a song, and sometimes I would just stick with something simple. At times I'd play a simple floor tom beat in 4/4, and it's all good. I just try to play what sounds good for the particular song.

Another factor would be that very early in my grade-school years, I started taking Spanish and grew up in LA surrounded by a ton of Hispanic culture. I became obsessed with all things Mexican and Latin. In fact, now that I think about it, my dad bought me my first drumset from his friend Victor

istanbul Agop Handmade cymbals from Turkey.

So many drummers. So many originals.

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Adam Weber
Andres Patrick
Armando Cabrera
Ben Hans
Ben Johnson
Billy&Paul English
Bobby Lee
Borislav Lochev
Brian Carter
Carlomagno Araya
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Chembo Corniel
Chuck Treece
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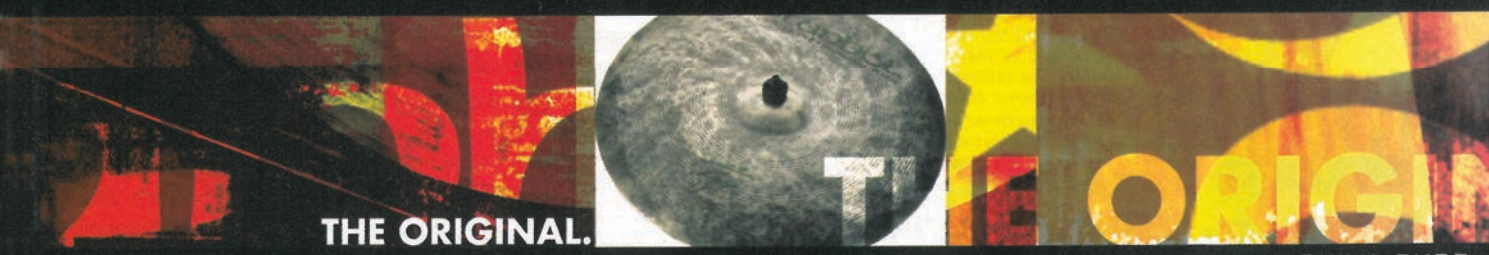

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Cortez, who is Mexican. And Victor showed me my first drum beats. That's as close as I've ever come to drum lessons. But Victor showed me one Latin beat that very first day. As time went on, I ended up taking eleven years of Spanish in school and spent an awful lot of time in Mexico and other Spanish-speaking places. I developed an ear for Latin music, be it merengue, Afro-Cuban, or older ceremonial rhythms, all the way up through the stuff Dizzy Gillespie was doing. So there's definitely a Latin influence in my drumming, which I think you can hear on the ALL albums.

That said, the Latin influence is pretty subtle. It will pop up within a few measures here and there. It's not like, "Hey, this is our Latin song," or "This is our jazz song." No, that's not us. But there are parts that have a not-so-white-bread feel to them.

MD: Could you liken that to playing more in phrases?

Bill: Yeah, thank you. That's what I was trying to say. On the other side of the spectrum, there's one other influence I've got to mention: Bill Ward of Black Sabbath. He made such a colossal impact on me. Talk about a drummer who never, ever plays the "keep the beat" thing, but at the same time always holds the song down heavier than anyone else. Bill played in phrases, and he was never just keeping time so that the band could play the song. He was playing a song.

That's one thing I picked up: this idea of playing phrases as opposed to just keeping time, setting the meter, or establishing an underbed for the other bandmembers to play off of. I'm not really a timekeeper. I don't just keep time. Instead, I play the *song*.

MD: You mentioned that you find ways of inserting different rhythms in your material, but that sometimes you're not successful at it. Have you ever recorded anything that you felt didn't work?

Bill: Oh, I'm sure I've recorded lots of things that didn't work. But most likely, I thought they were working at the time.

MD: What were some of those times that you don't feel right about?

Bill: A low point for me was in the late '80s, when I was doing most of my recording with a metronome and fell into that linear thing of "keeping the beat." The prime example of that would be something like "She's My Ex." I could've just used a drum machine to get the same sound. But I was obsessed with the new wave and pop that was happening at the time.

MD: The many recordings you've performed on throughout your lengthy career have allowed for an introspective look into the growth of your drumming. Do you feel like you're in a position where you're comfortable with your technique?

Bill: As a musician, you go through life learning what works and what doesn't. But the trick becomes not staying in your comfort zone. When drummers are just learning to play, they tend to play everything and anything for the sole reason that they *can*. That's not the best way to serve the music.

Certain phrases wear better on me than others. They "become" me more than other phrases. I could never play like Phil Rudd. If you said, "Here's a billion dollars to be in AC/DC and I'm going to kill your mom if you don't do it," I still wouldn't be able to do it the right way. The hard-rock style is just something I don't try to do. But if you said, "Here's a whole Billy Cobham album and I need you to learn it by this afternoon," I'd be like, "Okay, that's fine. I'll just listen to it once." [laughs]

MD: Do you feel that your not being able to play hard rock correctly is because you never really attempted to learn that exact style?
Bill: Yeah, probably. I'm copping out by saying that I can't do it. It's maybe that I've never tried to. Lord knows I do love "Highway To Hell," but I could *never* play that song right.

"I hear bands on the radio now that sound sort of Descendents-ish, but man, the production sounds like Def Leppard. Where's the reality, you know?"

Chip Guthrie

Bill Stevenson

MD: Simply because it's a track that's too straightforward?

Bill: Yeah. Unfortunately, I'm one of those guys who have to feel like they're doing something. I have to feel like if the whole band stopped and it was just me playing, it would still be cool to listen to.

MD: Do you feel like you are "cool to listen to"?

Bill: Sometimes. It's weird, because I've always been one of the primary songwriters in The Descendents and in ALL. So sometimes there can be conflict within me between, "What drum part is going to be fun to play so everybody thinks that I kick ass?" and "What drum part is good for the song?" In an ideal situation, they're one and the same. And then sometimes I find myself underplaying in my own songs. But in Karl's songs, I'm always able to play out and go for it, and it seems to be cool that way.

Drummers are mostly about "What's the bass player playing?" and "I'm part of this rhythm section in support of the song." But I'm more like, "Oh, what are the vocals saying?" or "Oh, this is the part where his girl's in bed with another guy. I've got to do a big fill here!" The lyrics are just as likely to dictate my phrasing as either the bass part or the meter of the song.

MD: I understand you've been very specific about one piece of hardware, your bass drum pedal.

Bill: I've used a Tama Hi-Beat pedal for twenty-two years. But they quit making it in

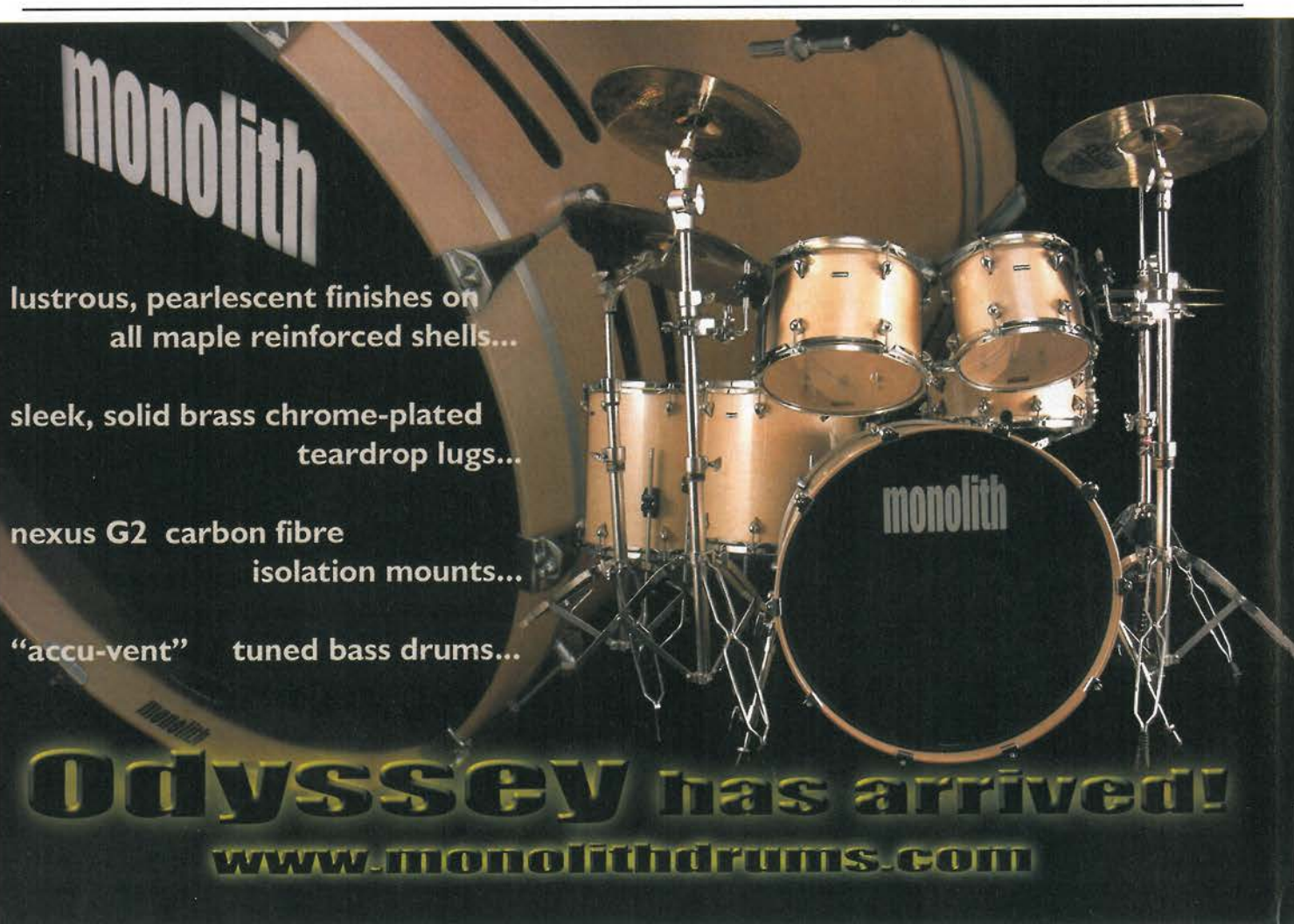
★Cool To★Be Bill★

Recordings:

Artist	Album
Descendents	Milo Goes To College
Black Flag	Process Of Weeding Out
ALL	ALL
Descendents	Liveage
ALL	Allroy's Revenge
Black Flag	In My Head
Descendents	Cool To Be You
ALL	Problematic

Faves:

Artist	Album	Drummer
Black Sabbath	Paranoid	Bill Ward
The Last	L.A. Explosion	Jack Reynolds
The Alley Cats	early singles	John McCarthy
Black Flag	Damaged	Robo
Mahavishnu Orchestra	Birds Of Fire	Billy Cobham
Jimi Hendrix Experience	Axis: Bold As Love	Mitch Mitchell
Generation X	Generation X	Mark Laff
Miles Davis	Four And More	Tony Williams



1984. I bought about a dozen of them at the time because they felt so good to me. But now I'm reaching the end of poaching them for parts, trying to make new ones that'll work. I've found another pedal that seems okay. It's a Yamaha FT9310 Flying Dragon. I've had good luck with it, which is quite a relief, since I've been looking for a new pedal for years.

MD: You also position your crash cymbals in a specific, symmetrical formation.

Bill: Yeah, it's been the same since 1981—just four crashes. They almost touch each other, all right out in front of me. So no matter what hand I'm playing with on whatever drum I hit, there's always a cymbal there. We have a lot of accents in our music, so I've got to have cymbals positioned where I can get to them.

Speaking of cymbals, I'm very fond of Paiste's Signature series. I've used them ever since they came out. Before that I had been using Paiste's Rude series, because they never broke.

MD: You don't bash your cymbals. You've always been so subtle with your right hand on the ride and hi-hats.

Bill: I've always felt that I had the kick and snare of a total rock guy, with the jazz brass work of a Tony Williams. When I hear drummers thrashing away on their hi-hats like they're sawing a tree or something, it sounds unattractive to me—unless it's a specific part that calls for it. Since I started engineering records, I've really noticed how important it is to play the cymbals at just the right volume. You don't want them to "upstage" the drums in the room mic's.

MD: Have you always been involved with your recordings as a producer?

Bill: Yeah, I've always been involved with it, all the way back to The Descendents' debut, *Milo Goes To College*. It was during the recording of our second album, *I Don't Want To Grow Up*, that I had to step in and start engineering, because the engineer was having some personal problems. But I didn't know what I was doing, and consequently *I Don't Want To Grow Up* sounds pretty terrible! [laughs]

MD: What are some of your issues with that record?

Bill: Somebody forgot to turn the guitar on. And the bass guitar needs to be turned down about 5 dB. And somebody forgot to take off all of that ridiculous '80s-sounding gated reverb. Uh, somebody forgot to make the record sound good! [laughs]

MD: Did you realize it at the time?

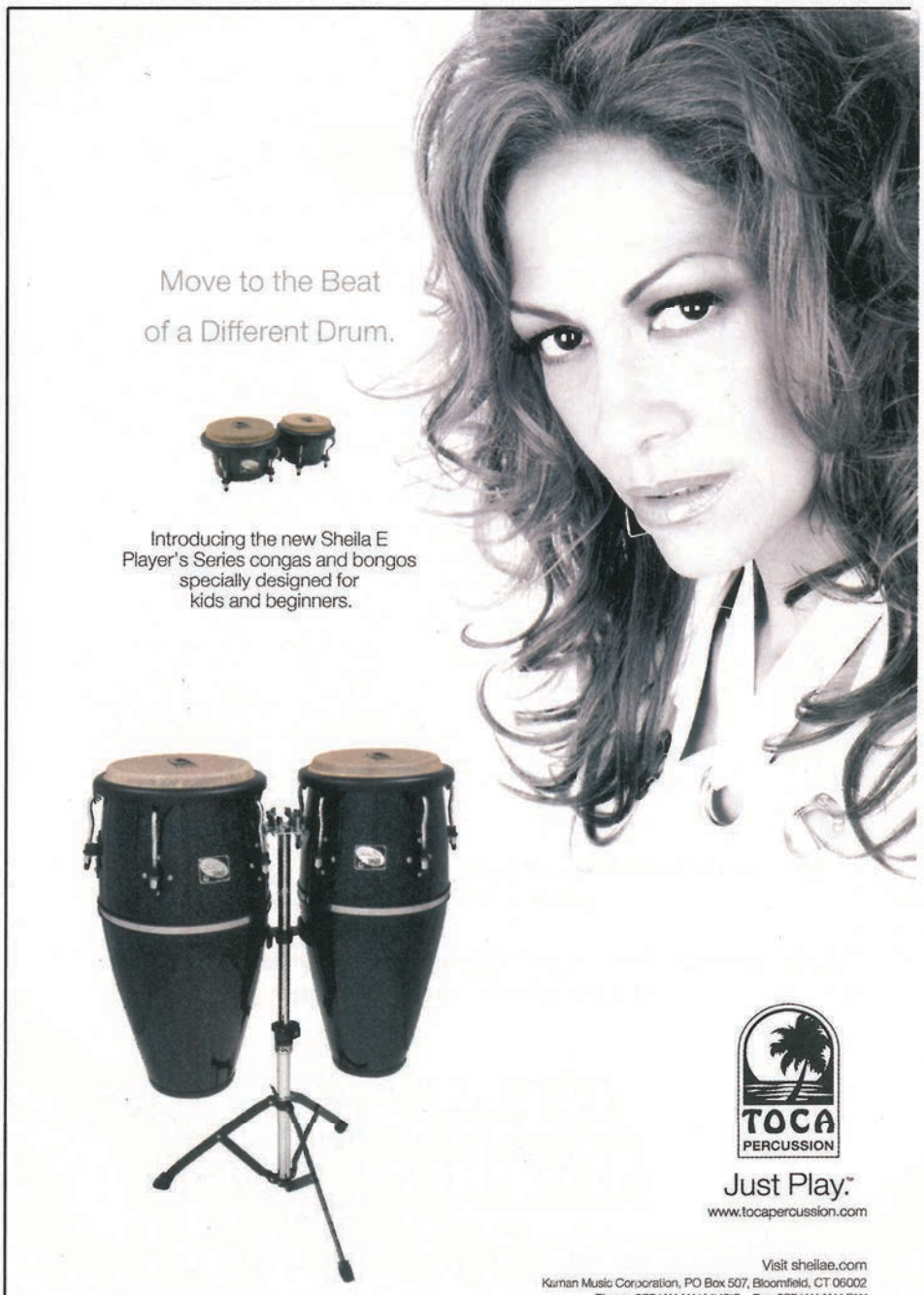
Bill: We knew it, but it didn't matter because our buddy's albums sounded bad too. All the cool bands' albums sounded bad, and it was okay. Bon Jovi's album sounded good. [laughs] It was one of the ways you separated the bands, and I still sort of feel that way. I hear things on the radio now that sound sort of Descendents-ish, but man, the production sounds like Def Leppard! I feel like someone's trying to pull the wool over my eyes. Where's the reality, you know?

MD: But moving on to your ALL recordings, you started becoming a little glossier with your drums, didn't you?

Bill: On one album, *Allroy Sez*, engineer Richard Andrews was a big fan of using a lot of reverb. That was a little phase we went through. Then we reacted by making the two driest records in the whole world, *Allroy's Revenge* and *Allroy Saves*.

MD: Yeah, what's up with those choppy, stiff-sounding *Allroy Saves* drums?

Bill: It's another horrible-sounding record. You see, I had to learn how to engineer by



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Bill Stevenson

experimenting on my own records. I hope you've heard some of the stuff I've produced lately, because I've improved a great deal.

MD: So what's your latest phase in your drumming?

Bill: I've been studying crazy, I mean *really crazy*, African music. I've actually been reading all about African rhythms and studying out of books—even the religious aspects of them. And my friends at my local drum store, Colorado Drum, have been helping me get my music reading and writing up to speed. I'm trying to get myself to that next place. And even though I don't know what that place is, I'm sure as hell trying to get there.

I've also started a new band called Only Crime, and the drumming is a little more heavy and aggressive than what I do in The Descendents or ALL. It's more like what I did in Black Flag.

MD: Did you feel like you hit a ceiling in your performance at some point?

Bill: No, more like a wall. So I've got to turn around and go in a different direction. But I don't know if it was negatively driven, as you might be suggesting. Let's just say that I found my groove, but now I want to find a new one.

Before I started studying all of this African stuff, I'd been listening to massive amounts of jazz, with a particular slant towards the Charlie Parker/Dizzy Gillespie era of bebop and also Ornette Coleman's albums. Actually, ALL has recorded six songs that incorporate a bebop structure, in that we establish a chorus, play through it

Stacie Stevenson

once, and then from there improvise either individually or collectively at various times. Then we return to the chorus.

This is an exciting time for me. The Descendants haven't put out a record in a long time, and I think the public perception is that we've been in a holding pattern of being stagnant or stale. But the fact is, we've been woodshedding and trying to reinvent ourselves—for the fourth or fifth time. Maybe it's not getting harder, but our ambition levels are getting higher. And I think the reason we've been able to stay around for so long is we've been into the music for the right reasons. It's music for music's sake. That continues to be just as valid as when we were kids.

MD: Have you felt that playing punk rock has been a good career choice for you?

Bill: I'm still not confident enough to see music for me as a viable career. There's some insecurity in me, and I don't know where it comes from. I still don't have a sense that I'm a musician and this is what I do. I wake up some mornings, think about my wife and two kids, and I feel that weight in my chest, like, "I'm just a punker. How am I going to take care of this family? I should've finished college." And so I've never been comfortable with the idea that this is a real career for me. I guess I need to get over it and just enjoy it.

For more on Bill Stevenson, check out his Web site at www.drumogre.com.

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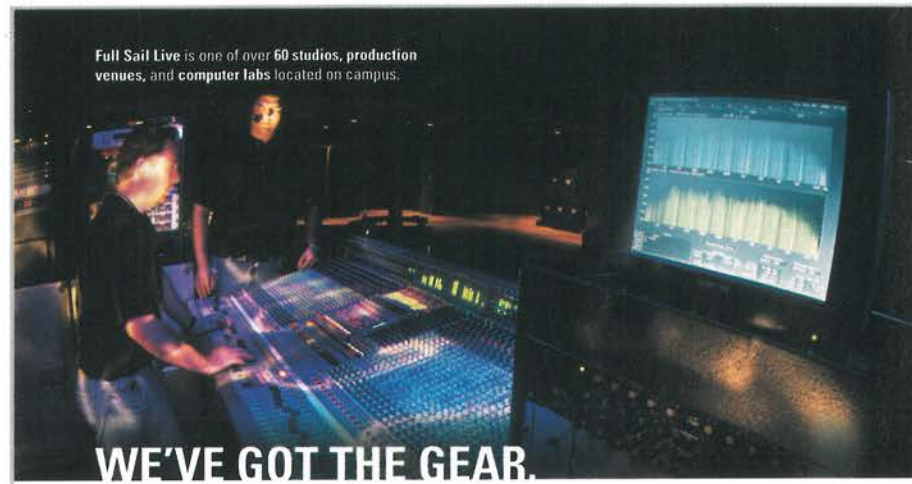

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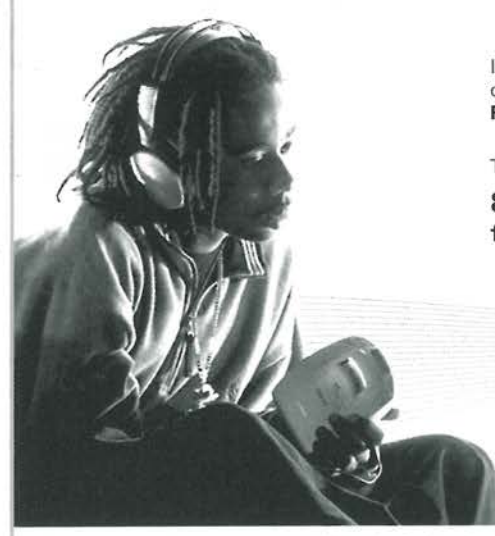

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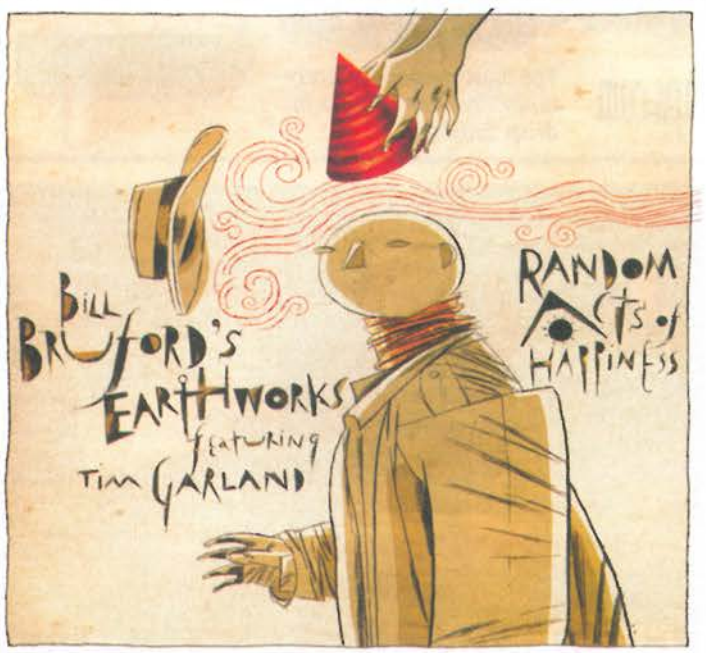
Bill Bruford's Earthworks

Random Acts Of Happiness (Summerfold) ♦♦♦♦

BILL BRUFORD's instrumental jazz is sophisticated and cerebral. This beautifully documented set, recorded live at Yoshi's in Oakland, California, reveals the legendary drummer's best playing to date. His articulate and dynamic hand technique defines perfection. Bruford has gracefully sculptured an acoustic progressive jazz style that is distinctively his own. (www.billbruford.com) **Mike Haid**



The Cooper Temple Clause

Kick Up The Fire, And Let The Flames Break Loose (RCA) ♦♦♦

A veritable smorgasbord of percussive rock rhythms, patterns, tones—and best of all, ideas—The Cooper Temple Clause's RCA debut finds **JON HARPER** to be quite a busy man behind the kit. Harper's responsible for generating a wide array of material—and then trying to make it all fit. There's some cool programming to be found in the act's repertoire, but Harper's best when slamming away ("A.I.M.") or in step with tightly riffed guitar rhythms ("Promises, Promises"). Sonically referencing everything from Nirvana and Radiohead to The Jesus And Mary Chain and The Cure, it's an overwhelming presentation, better appreciated in small doses. **Waleed Rashidi**

ALBUMS

Akira Tana

Moon Over The World (Sons Of Sound) ♦♦♦

With over a hundred discs as a sideman under his belt, **AKIRA TANA** has surely earned his leader stripes. Each of his three solo outings boasts a mature, focused eloquence. Originally a Japan-only 1993 release, *Moon* highlights the jazz drummer in an acoustic trio. It's a highly satisfying setting for Tana's intricate, sensitive, and swinging drumming. Aided by bassist **Rufus Reid** and pianist **Ted Lo**, Tana offers impressive originals, covers, and jazz treatments of traditional and popular Japanese and Chinese melodies. Tana is a big listener, an exciting "orchestrator" who employs his formidable chops for phrase building. Not a gratuitous note in the set. **Jeff Potter**

Roy Haynes Fountain Of Youth (Dreyfus Jazz) ♦♦♦

What impresses most about **ROY HAYNES**—beyond his staggering abilities at seventy-plus years of age, unflappable swing, and killer chops—is his unerring musicality. Haynes massages his band of twenty-somethings with a combination of unparalleled experience and seemingly magical perception. You can hear the drummer thinking and acting in all the right moments: prodding, cajoling, responding, coaxing, swinging, and dropping bombs under his charges with both a gentle hand and a hardy slap on the ass. Recorded when Haynes was not playing with his Birds Of A Feather group, *Fountain Of Youth* shows the living legend as teacher, scholar, and still explosive drumming master. **Ken Micallef**

Mylab Mylab (Terminus) ♦♦

Lord only knows who's playing what on *Mylab*, a recording project hosted by keyboardist **Wayne Horvitz** and drummer **TUCKER MARTINE.** Instruments are layered, edited, and manipulated with effects, so it's often tough to distinguish between Martine and drumming guests **BOBBY PREVITE** and **ANDY ROTH**. But no matter; Mylab isn't concerned with individual achievement. As dynamics shift slowly to bring on a trance, each track mixes electronics with organic sounds like banjo, brushed snare, and cymbal bell. There's not much structural movement, but *Mylab* is just the thing to put on as the sun rises after a long night of techno. (www.terminusrecords.com) **Michael Parillo**

EXTREME BEATS by Jeff Perlah

Motörhead Stone Deaf Forever! (Sanctuary)

"It would have been possible to do a lot of drum solos," long-time Motörhead drummer **MIKKEY DEE** recently told *MD*. "But that would have destroyed the group's hard, straightaway, rock 'n' roll sound." That sound shows up in abundance on *Stone Deaf Forever!*, a five-disc box set that spans the pioneering metal/hard rock band's thirty-year run.

The first two CDs here showcase drummers **PHIL TAYLOR**—who set Motörhead's drum blueprint in stone on classics like 1977's *Motörhead*, 1979's *Overkill*, and 1980's *Ace Of Spades*—and **PETER GILL**, whose stay was brief but impressive, as 1986's *Orgasmatron* proves.

Dee, who has played longer than any other drummer in the British-bred group, appears on three discs, including *Live! 1978-1999*, which offers bootleg cuts, outtakes, and other rarities. Dee joined Motörhead for 1992's *March Or Die* (**Ozzy** and **Slash** showed up for that one too), and has drummed for King Diamond, Don Dokken, and Helloween.

In addition to album and EP tracks, *Stone Deaf* features Peel- and BBC-session cuts, an Internet download of "Orgasmatron 2000," and the band's entire recording history chronicled in a marvelous 60-page booklet. It's there that you'll find this lovely announcement: "These men will eat your brain, shatter your skull, and reduce you to a quivering, gibbering wreck." A pretty accurate description, it would seem.

John La Barbera Big Band

On The Wild Side (Jazz Compass)

Buddy Rich fans will rejoice that this CD includes John La Barbera's arrangement of "Walk On The Wild Side Suite," which was a staple of Buddy's live set but was never recorded. Drummer **JOE LA BARBERA**, who hasn't been recorded in a big band setting since his days with Woody Herman, drives the band with authority and backs soloists with the sensitivity he displayed in The Bill Evans Trio. Traditional big band recordings don't get any better than this combination of great charts and inspired musicianship. (www.jazzcompass.com) **Rick Mattingly**

Terry Silverlight Wild (independent)

New York session man **TERRY SILVERLIGHT** has long deserved higher name recognition among drummers. Changing hats between writer, arranger, producer, and drummer, he's amassed an impressive résumé since the '70s. This second solo release is informed by '70s funk/fusion, with a dash of straight-ahead and Weather Report. Though this may signal dated fare for some tastes, it's a great showcase for Silverlight's dazzling kit chops and bull's-eye groove. Joined by heavy-hitter chums such as **Will Lee**, **Hiram Bullock**, **Lew Soloff**, **Chuck Loeb**, and **Paul Shaffer**, Silverlight's assertive edge keeps the energy pinned. (www.terrysilverlight.com) **Jeff Potter**

Satoko Fujii Orchestra—East

Before The Dawn (NatSat)

The atonal clashes and swirling, whining sonic washes of *Before The Dawn*'s opener, "Pakonya," conjure images of a wild animal caravan trekking across miles of desert and instinctively, and frighteningly, ending up at to your doorstep. **MASAHIRO UEMURA** burrows into this dirty, subversive big band music with a kind of bestial, muscular brand of funk-rock-jazz drumming that is at times naturally in sync with the other musicians. "Joh-Ha-Cue" motors along in 5/4, only to have that oddness splintered by Uemura's jagged closing solo. Uemura simply refuses to play the obvious—a trait that befits this experimental setting. Not for the squeamish. **Will Romano**

Sticks And Stones Shed Grace (Thrill Jockey)

Chicago Underground drummer **CHAD TAYLOR** pulls off fantastic tricks on this avant-garde caravan of an album, recalling everything from a '60s free-jazz fireball to a multi-limbed snake charmer/percussionist extrapolating on drums, noisy balls, bells, feathers, and found-sound toys. Working with a playful touch and attention to miniscule detail, Taylor supports the horns, bass, and clarinet with a gardener's sense of nourishment. "The Refusal" features fantastic brushwork that sounds like a dozen rats scurrying over the kit, climaxing in a cymbal supernova and a dry mambo beat. **Ken Micallef**

Big Phat Band XXL (Silverline)

Gordon Goodwin's group is as versatile, funky, and spontaneous as a big band can be. A lot of credit for that has to go to the rhythm section and how they interpret those 8th notes. Drummer **BERNIE DRESEL** comes out charging, his hard-swinging shuffle driving "High Maintenance," and **RAY BRINKER** handles two orchestrated pop tunes nicely. **PETER ERSKINE**, ever precise and soulful, is brought in for five of the most challenging cuts here, including the driving funk of "A Game Of Inches" with **Michael Brecker**, and the madcap Looney Tunes–meets–Stan Kenton feeling of "Hunting Wabbits." (www.silverlinerecords.com) **Robin Tolleson**

THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY by Mike Haid

Neal Morse, Racer X, Salty The Pocketknife

You can take Neal Morse out of Spock's Beard, but you can't take Spock's Beard out of Neal Morse. The spiritually driven material on *Testimony* is the most emotionally stirring music the multi-talented Morse has yet created, and maintains many complex characteristics of his progressive roots. **MIKE PORTNOY** provides tastefully restrained drumming for Morse to deliver his progressive Christian rock message. (Radiant/Metal Blade)

Longtime underground progressive metal band Racer X knows how to lay down the old-school heavy rock/metal sound. On *Getting Heavier*, Judas Priest drummer **SCOTT TRAVIS** drives classic melodic metal with cool grooves that will make many double bass drummers want to put on the phones and dig in. (Shrapnel)

The progressive punk-metal aggressions of Salty The Pocketknife bring to mind a back-alley version of Marco Minnemann's Illegal Aliens. On their self-titled disc, the hard-edged, provocative, and uniquely animated vocals of **Rosebud** draw the listener into the unexpected lyrical and musical anarchy. Drummer **EVAN STONE** covers the challenging musical styles with conviction, creativity, and impressive chops. Innovative, cutting edge, and addictive stuff. (Sonance Records, www.saltythepocketknife.com)

Modereko Solar Igniter (Harmonized)

Drawing from a deep well of patterns and time feels, the versatile **JOHN MOLO** really gets to strut his stuff on *Solar Igniter*. The goal is to keep 'em dancing, and Molo answers the call. The drummer makes no false moves, whether he's dropping some tight funk or exploring looser, jammier territory. A shuffle in seven, a Latin beat, a clipped jungle rhythm—it seems Molo finds a way to mine it all, and always with a fat, vivid tone. His bandmates—on horns, keys, and guitars—respond with aplomb, hinting at vintage groups like The Grateful Dead, Little Feat, and Steely Dan. (modereko.com, harmonizedrecords.com) **Michael Parillo**

Oz Noy Oz Live (independent)

Israeli-born guitarist Oz Noy has made a huge impact on the New York scene since arriving in 1996. His unique playing is an alternately blazing and grooving blend of pop, rock, blues, funk, and jazz. This disc, recorded at New York City's Bitter End over the course of three nights, features two of the best drummers in town, **ANTON FIG** and **KEITH CARLOCK**, as well as bassists **Will Lee**, **Reggie Washington**, and **James Genus**. Oz gives both drummers the space to really lay it down here. (www.oznoy.com.) **Billy Amendola**

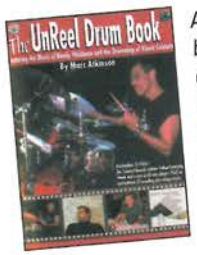
BOOKS

The UnReel Drum Book

by Marc Atkinson (Warner Bros.)

level: advanced

$34.95 (with 2 CDs)



At last, a book that reveals a blueprint for the over-the-top drumming of Vinnie Colaiuta. In this unusual package, Marc Atkinson dissects, explains, and provides charts of Vinnie's rhythmic ideas from keyboardist Randy Waldman's *UnReel* CD (included) featuring complex jazz-based arrangements of classic television and movie themes. Also included are the charts Vinnie used on the Waldman sessions. Atkinson transcribes Vinnie's solos note-for-note, sequences them to a drum machine at a slower tempo (thank you), and explains the rhythmic concept behind each one. The accompanying CD is quite helpful in understanding the complicated rhythm scale that is the foundation of Vinnie's vocabulary. Two music-minus-drums tracks are also included. This is highly advanced material with exercises guaranteed to twist your melon, not to mention your four limbs. **Mike Haid**

Vodou Drumset: Drumset Applications Of Traditional Afro-Haitian Rhythms

by James Armstrong & Travis Knepper (Carl Fischer)

level: intermediate to advanced, $24.95 with CD

If you "cheat" and go straight to the audio in this package, you'll wonder if someone has slipped you the wrong CD. (The voodoo begins!) The first track is an eight-bar mid-tempo rock vamp; the second is a twelve-bar blues. The authors provide these familiar play-alongs because, frankly, few of us will ever be called upon to trot out arcane Haitian drum patterns in authentic surroundings. So, they figure, why not allow these charming rhythms to enrich our execution of standard repertoire? Speaking of enriching, the essays on Haitian culture are excellent. No question, with rhythms such as yanvalou, ibo, and nago, most of us are treading in unfamiliar territory. But it's a wondrous journey. **T. Bruce Wittet**

Traditional Afro-Cuban Concepts In Contemporary Music

Arturo Rodriguez (Mel Bay)

level: all, $29.95 (with two CDs)

Rodriguez' clear, spirited text delivers abundant knowledge of Afro-Cuban concepts, techniques, and patterns for timbales, congas, bongos, and kit, as well as excellent outlines of history and styles. Rhythms are represented in spreadsheet-like columns of dotted boxes. Dubbing each illustration a "matrix," Rodriguez claims this system "works best for all students, especially those with no formal musical training." It must be argued, however, that students won't learn to eventually recognize the patterns in actual notation, and reading students will be slowed down by the graphs. There's plenty to like here, but students and teachers should assess whether the "matrix" works for them. **Jeff Potter**

Essential Drum Books from Music Dispatch

AFRO-CUBAN COORDINATION FOR DRUMSET

by Maria Martinez • Musicians Institute Press

In-depth coverage of: Mambo, Songo, Nanigo and Mozambique patterns; cowbell and ride cymbal variations; studies to develop left-foot clave; ostinatos, rhythm studies, 2-bar phrases; and much more! CD features 40 full-band tracks with demos & play-alongs.

00695328 Book/CD Pack $14.95

BASS DRUM CONTROL

by Colin Bailey • Hal Leonard

This perennial favorite among drummers helps players develop their bass drum technique and increase their flexibility through the mastery of exercises.

06620020 Book/CD Pack $17.95

BRAZILIAN COORDINATION FOR DRUMSET

by Maria Martinez • Musicians Institute Press

Experience these revolutionary studies for Brazilian drumset coordination, covering: Bossa Nova, Samba and Baiao Ostinatos, 3/4 Bossa Nova/Samba, 7/4 Bossa Nova/Samba, rhythm studies, rhythmic phrases, and more! The CD includes 48 full-band tracks.

00695284 Book/CD Pack $14.95

THE COMPLETE DRUMSET RUDIMENTS

by Peter Magadini • Hal Leonard

Use your imagination to incorporate these rudimental etudes into new patterns that you can apply as you develop your hand technique with the *Snare Drum Rudiments*, hand and foot technique with the *Drumset Rudiments* and polyrhythmic technique with the *Polyrhythm Rudiments*. Includes demonstrations of the rudiments and drum solos.

06620016 Book/CD Pack $14.95

DOUBLE BASS DRUMMING

by Jeff Bowders • Musicians Institute Press

Through the use of an innovative "mirror system," this book develops each foot equally, providing the player with the maximum flexibility for playing creative patterns. Includes: over 500 realistic double-bass grooves based on eighth-note, sixteenth-note and triplet feels; snare drum and cymbal variations; and an 87-track CD.

00695723 Book/CD Pack $19.95

DRUM TUNING

by Scott Schroedl • Hal Leonard

This book/CD includes step-by-step instructions along with over 35 professional photos and 29 tracks on the enclosed CD. Covers: preparation; drumhead basics; drum construction and head properties; tom-toms; snare drum; bass drum; the drum set as one instrument; drum sounds and tuning over the years; when to change heads; and more.

06620060 Book/CD Pack $12.95

DRUMMER'S GUIDE TO ODD METERS

by Ed Roscetti • Musicians Institute Press

Unlock the secrets of odd time signatures! Covers studies in 3/4, 5/4, 3/8, 5/8, 6/8, 7/8, 9/8 and other odd-time meters. Includes complete song charts with play-along CD tracks, rhythm guides and detailed analysis, the Five Steps to Musicality and more!

00695349 Book/CD Pack $14.95

THE DRUMSET MUSICIAN

by Rod Morgenstein and Rick Mattingly • Hal Leonard

This beginning- to intermediate-level book contains hundreds of practical, usable beats and fills. It teaches how to apply a variety of patterns and grooves to the actual performance of songs. CD includes demos & 14 play-along tracks covering rock, blues and pop styles.

06620011 Book/CD Pack $19.95

40 INTERMEDIATE SNARE DRUM SOLOS

by Ben Hans • Hal Leonard

This book provides the advancing percussionist with interesting solo material in all musical styles. Includes: 40 intermediate snare drum solos presented in easy-to-read notation; a music glossary; Percussive Arts Society rudiment chart; suggested sticking, dynamics and articulation markings; and much more!

06620067 ..... $7.95

FUNK & HIP-HOP DRUMMING

by Ed Roscetti • Musicians Institute Press

This book/CD teaches the feel, grooves, fills and styles you need to know for funk and hip-hop drumming. Includes lessons on: feeling the downbeats; syncopated backbeats; in between straight and swing; feeling the upbeats; three ways to explore and play time; hip-hop shuffle; straight time; moving the sixteenths; and more.

00695679 Book/CD Pack $14.95

HAL LEONARD SNARE DRUM METHOD

by Rick Mattingly • Hal Leonard

Geared toward beginning band and orchestra students, this modern, musical approach to learning snare drum includes a play-along CD. Also includes: fun-to-play solos and etudes; duets; studies in 4/4, 2/4, 3/4, 6/8 and cut-time; roll studies; the 40 Percussive Arts Society International Drum Rudiments; and much more!

06620059 Book/CD Pack $10.95

INSTANT GUIDE TO DRUM GROOVES

by Maria Martinez • Hal Leonard

From traditional Dixieland to cutting-edge hip-hop, this book/CD is a handy source featuring 100 patterns that will prepare working drummers for the stylistic variety of modern gigs. Includes essential beats and grooves in such styles as: jazz, shuffle, country, rock, funk, New Orleans, reggae, calypso, Brazilian and Latin.

06620056 Book/CD Pack $9.95

101 DRUM TIPS

by Scott Schroedl • Hal Leonard

This book presents valuable how-to insight that drummers of all styles and levels can benefit from. The text, photos, music, diagrams, and accompanying CD provide a terrific, easy-to-use resource for a variety of topics, including: grooves • practicing • warming up • tuning • gear • performance • and much more!

06620071 Book/CD Pack $14.95

POLYRHYTHMS – THE MUSICIAN'S GUIDE

by Peter Magadini • Hal Leonard

Written for instrumentalists and vocalists alike, this book/CD contains excellent solos and exercises that feature polyrhythmic concepts. Topics covered include: 6 over 4, 5 over 4, 7 over 4, 3 over 4, 11 over 4, and other rhythmic ratios; combining various polyrhythms; polyrhythmic time signatures; and much more.

06620053 Book/CD Pack $19.95

WORKIN' DRUMS

by Ben Hans • Hal Leonard

This collection of solo drumset music will provide the practicing drummer with interesting ideas to explore through a varied selection of musical styles and degrees of difficulty. It will also help drummers acquire a better knowledge of form, dynamics, music terminology and overall musicianship.

06620062 ..... $9.95

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Gary Husband/Mondesir Brothers

To The Power Of Three (RSJ Groove)

level: intermediate to advanced, $49.99 (with CD)
(limited-time price; subject to fluctuations in exchange rate)

It's always inspiring to watch highly skilled jazz-rock fusion players perform in an unrestricted atmosphere of creativity. That's what this project is all about. The multi-talented **GARY HUSBAND** displays his mastery of electric keyboards while the incredible drumming talents of **MARK MONDESIR** are sure to win the attention and respect of the international drumming community. Among the special features, Husband and Mondesir engage in a drumming duet reminiscent of the early drum battles of Rich vs. Roach, though this exchange sounds closer to Billy Cobham vs. Tony Williams. The audio CD features the same great material as the DVD. (www.rsjgroove.com)

Mike Haid

Develop Your Technique *Naturally*

WITH DAVE WECKL!

Exercises for Natural Playing

Based on the award-winning *A Natural Evolution* DVD series, ***Exercises for Natural Playing*** (book and CD) offers the reader exciting new exercises and concepts not covered in the DVDs, as well as material complementary to the series. Weckl provides key insight into:

- Hand positioning
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Dave provides written details, photos, and performance examples on the CD that will help players evolve their technique naturally.

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Dave explains his natural approach to the drums in ***How to Develop Technique.*** In clear language and with careful demonstrations, Weckl explains his concepts on: stick grip, wrist technique and finger technique and rebound approach for both hand and feet. The DVD contains live performances by The All- Star Dave Weckl Band and special appearance by the legendary Freddie Gruber!

In ***How to Practice,*** Dave helps you get the most out of your playing and prep time. Here Weckl demonstrates and explains: warm ups, independent practice, hand and feet development and Swiss triplets. A special acoustic group assembled for this production shows these concepts in live performance.

InSession (Charts derived from Weckl Album *Rhythm of the Soul*)
Play Along with the Dave Weckl Band!

In Session gives players the opportunity to play along with the band. Complete with charts and play-along CD, this book is available for bass, drums, guitar, keyboard, and saxophone. A great way to experiment and learn from one of the hottest bands today!

The Zone (1CD, 1DVD sampler)

Anyone thinking about taking up drums or playing in a band should pick up this CD/DVD. The CD features hot tunes with the Dave Weckl Band and the DVD includes a special sampler of the "Natural Evolution" award winning DVD Series.

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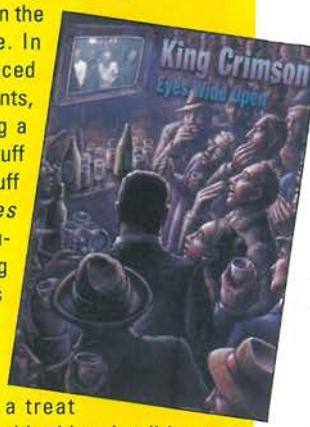
King Crimson

Eyes Wide Open (Sanctuary)

level: all, $29.98

For King Crimson's 2000 album *The ConstruKction Of Light*, **PAT MASTELOTTO** played an all-electronic kit. No snare, no cymbals—only the digital variety. And that's what he took out on the road, for a while. In time Pat reintroduced acoustic instruments, eventually forming a snazzy hybrid of stuff you plug in and stuff you just hit. *Eyes Wide Open*, a double DVD featuring full-length gigs from London and Tokyo, captures the drummer in both modes. It's a treat just to *see* him do his thing, in all its tom-booming, beat-flipping glory.



Disc I, filmed last year in Japan as the band began touring behind its *Power To Believe* LP, is the better of the two DVDs. (Both concerts focus on newer material, with songs from '94's *Thrak* being the oldest.) Colors are lush and vibrant—not a given for a Crimson video release—and the stellar sound translates bass beautifully. By now Mastelotto knows how to maneuver his gear into some very creative territory. He plays comfortably over loops, which allows considerable freedom and flexibility. The second disc (England, 2000) offers some good fun as well, such as randomly changing improv segments that come up differently each time you play the concert. It's interesting to behold Pat's digital setup, but you can practically feel him thinking, This is only temporary. The electronic timbres are well suited to Crimzoid weirdness, but a drummer as sensitive as Mastelotto is wise to get back to a wood/metal/pad arsenal that combines the best of both worlds.

Michael Parillo

To hear many of the artists reviewed in this month's *Critique*, be sure to tune in to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.

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Winter NAMM Events

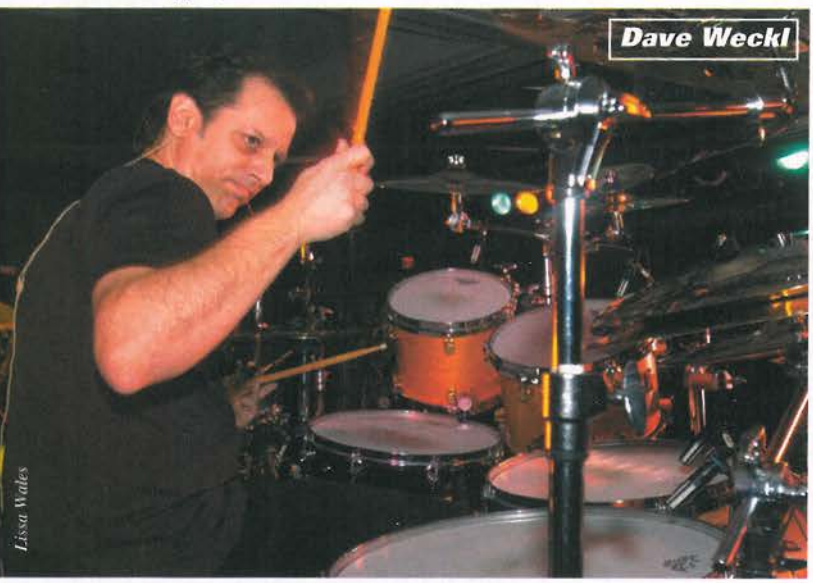
Besides the excitement generated by hundreds of new percussion products, the annual Winter NAMM trade show in Anaheim, California also generates musical excitement with after-show concerts and special events. Here's a look at some of the performances that took place at NAMM after hours.

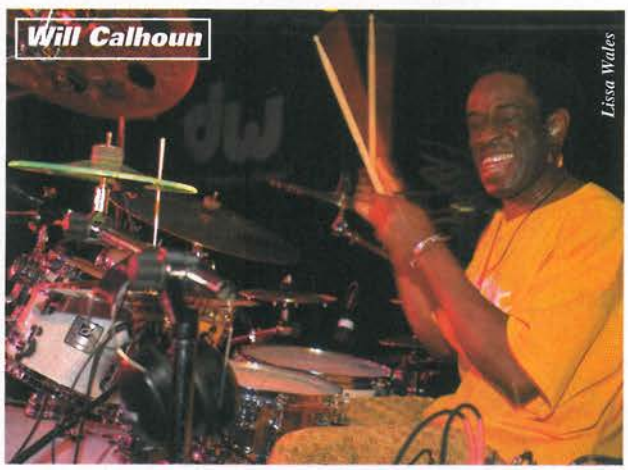
Sabian Live!

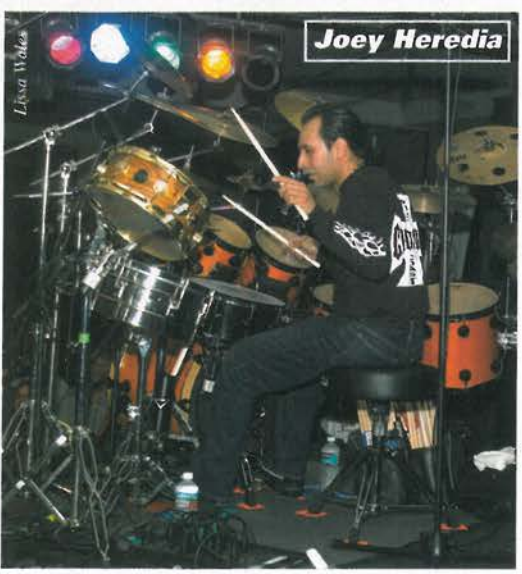
The Sabian Live! show was held on Friday, January 16. The evening began with the presentation of Lifetime Achievement Awards to **Carmine Appice**, **Billy Cobham**, **Harvey Mason**, and **Bernard "Pretty" Purdie**. Carmine and Bernard were on hand to receive their awards. Yamaha's Takashi "Hagi" Hagiwara accepted Billy's award on his behalf, while Harvey's award was accepted by his nephew, LA drummer **James Mason**.

Musical festivities followed, with stellar performances from The **Dave Weckl** Band, Living Colour (featuring drummer **Will Calhoun**), and **Joey Heredia** & Friends (with Santana percussionists **Raul Rekow** and **Karl Perazzo** sitting in).

Sabian company officers and Lifetime Achievement Award recipients (from left): vice presidents Bill and Andy Zildjian, drummer James Mason (accepting for Harvey Mason), Carmine Appice, Bernard Purdie, Yamaha's "Hagi" Hagiwara (accepting for Billy Cobham), Sabian chairman Robert Zildjian, and company president Dan Barker

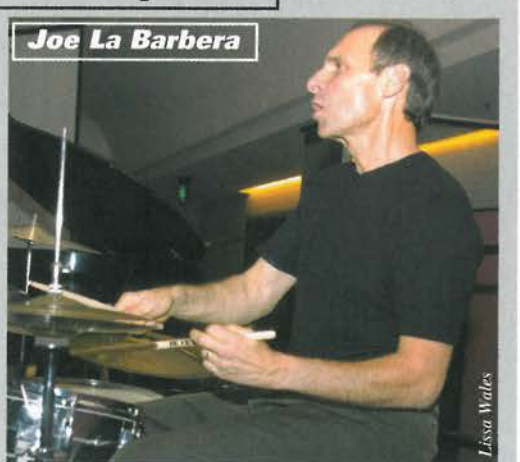






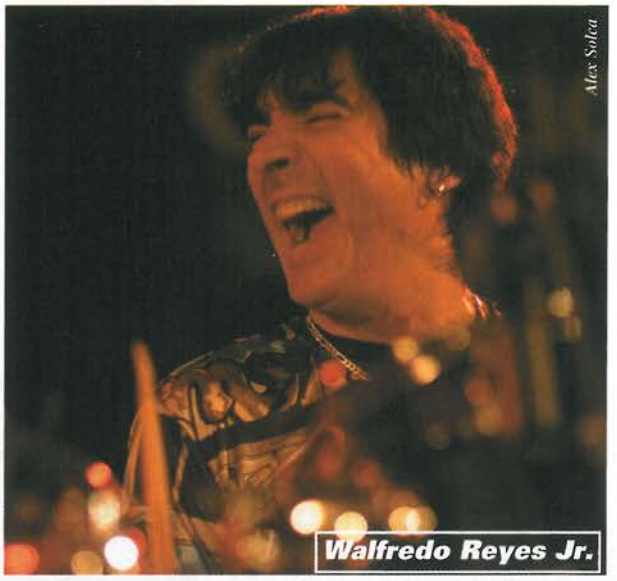
Zildjian Artist Reception

The Zildjian Cymbal Company hosted their artist "hang" on Friday, January 16. The event provided an opportunity for artists who had come to the show to conduct autograph sessions, or just to browse at all the new gear. Among the many drummers in attendance were studio legend **Earl Palmer**, **Anton Fig**, **Richie Morales**, **Dennis Diken**, **Denny Seiwell**, **Joe Porcaro**, **Rob Ladd**, and **Airto**. Music for the evening was provided by **Joe La Barbera** and his jazz group.



Latin Percussion Anniversary Party

Latin Percussion's 40th Anniversary Concert on Saturday, January 17 was a high-energy show hosted by **Richie "Gajate" Garcia**. Featured performers included **The Escovedo Family**, **The Reyes Family**, **The Joey Heredia Trio**, **Pedro Martinez**, **Little Johnny Rivero**, **Kaki King**, **Lyle Workman** (with **Gary Novak** on drums), **Avance**, and The LP Percussion All-Stars: **Giovanni Hidalgo**, **Karl Perazzo**, **Raul Rekow**, **Armando Peraza**, and **Ron Powell**. The concert was co-sponsored by **Audio-Technica**, **Center Staging**, **Evans**, ***Modern Drummer***, **Music Pro**, **Remo**, and **Warner Bros.**



The Escovedo Family: Pete on shaker and vocals, Peter Michael on conga, and Sheila on agogo bell

Yamaha Groove Night 5

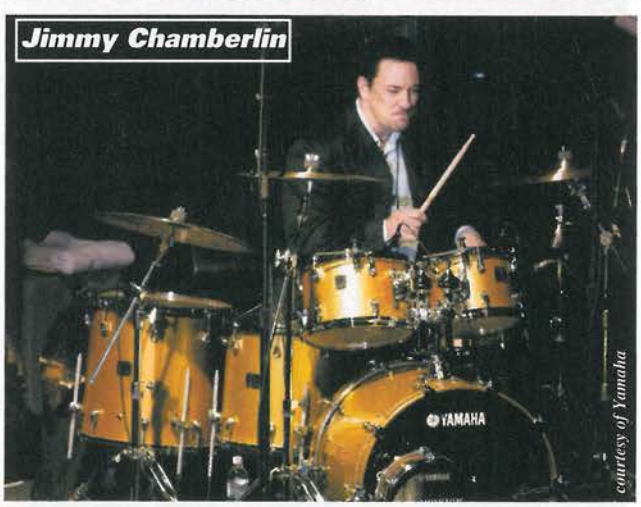
Groove Night event was originally conceived as a way for Yamaha drum artists to help celebrate the birthday of the company's legendary drum guru, **Takashi "Hagi" Hagiwara**. This year, the fifth edition of the event—held at the Galaxy Theater in Santa Ana on Saturday, January 17—was made bittersweet by presentations from Yamaha and from the Zildjian company celebrating Hagi's retirement after more than forty years with Yamaha. Special recognition was also given to drumming icons **Earl Palmer** and **Roy Haynes**.

Yamaha drum guru Takashi "Hagi" Hagiwara was honored on his retirement with presentations from Yamaha Corp. Of America president Yoshihiro Doi (above, far left) and from Craigie Zildjian and John DeChristopher of Zildjian. Yamaha also honored drum legends Earl Palmer and Roy Haynes. Above, from left: Yamaha's Joe Testa, Earl Palmer, John DeChristopher, Roy Haynes, Craigie Zildjian, and Hagi.

Musical entertainment was provided by over two dozen Yamaha drum stars from around the world. They performed with crack LA band The Bristols, augmented by Will Lee on bass and vocals, **Ralph MacDonald** on percussion, and a blazing horn section. A special highlight was a guest appearance by singer/songwriter Jackson Browne. Drummer/raconteur **Rick Marotta** once again served as emcee for the evening. Each drummer performed one tune, with the focus on groove and feel rather than on a display of technical prowess. In a departure from previous shows, rock and pop tunes joined classic R&B material in the repertoire. The capacity crowd could barely stay seated as the grooves washed over them.

The event ended on a high note, as drummer after drummer took turns on the three onstage kits for a rousing rendition of James Brown's "Gonna Have A Funky Good Time."

Also appearing on the show were **Tom Brechtlein**, **Paul Brochu**, **Gerry Brown**, **Terri Lyne Carrington**, **Ndugu Chancler**, **Mickey Curry**, **Peter Erskine**, **Akira Jimbo**, **Steve Jordan**, **Paul Leim**, **Jerry Marotta**, **Dave Mattacks**, **Russ Miller**, **Richie Morales**, **Jamie Oldaker**, **Chris Parker**, **John "JR" Robinson**, **Eiji Shimamura**, **Jabo Starks**, **Clyde Stubblefield**, and **Dave Weckl**. (To view photos of these artists, go to www.moderndrummer.com.) Additional support for Groove Night was provided by ***Modern Drummer***, **Paiste**, **The Percussive Arts Society**, **Remo**, **Sabian**, and **Zildjian**.



International Fastest Drummer Contest

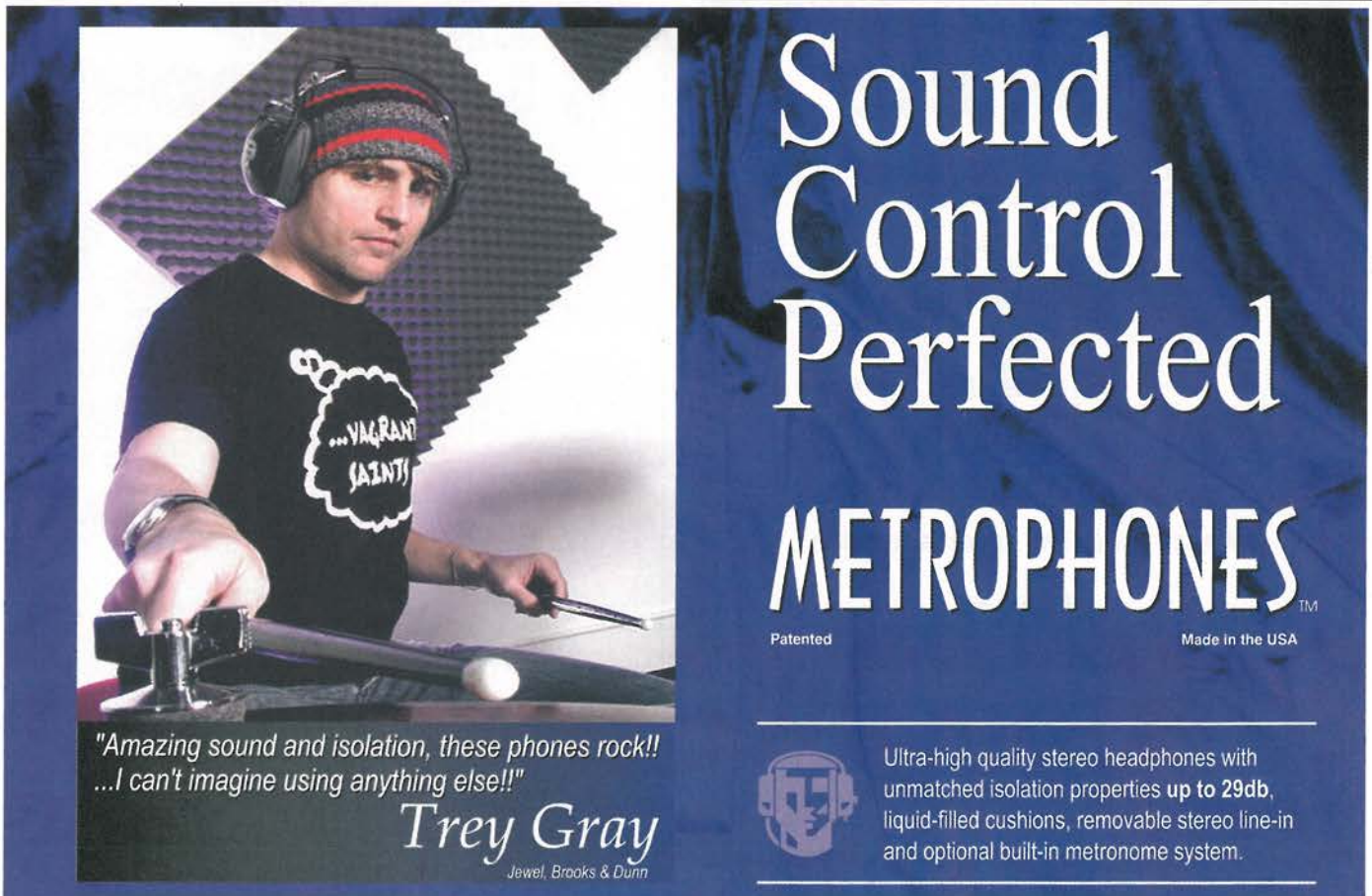
The Second Annual NAMM International Fastest Drummer, an interactive event sponsored by The Music Edge.com, NAMM's teen promotional initiative, was open to everyone attending the show. Fastest Hands and Fastest Feet preliminaries started Thursday, January 15, with contestants scored on playing single strokes for sixty seconds, as recorded by the Drumometer. Spectators were also treated to appearances by **Clyde Stubblefield** and **John "Jabo" Starks** (James Brown), **Jon "Bermuda" Schwartz** (Weird Al Yankovic), **Bobby Rondinelli** (Blue Öyster Cult), **Jerry Mercer** (April Wine), **Glen Sobel** (Beautiful Creatures), and **Michael Brahm** (Gene Loves Jezebel).

Finals for both categories were held on NAMM's main stage on Sunday, January 18. Host **Johnny Rabb** astonished the audience as he demonstrated some serious chops and grooves while playing a cocktail kit. WFD champions **Mike Mangini**, **Jotan Afanador**, **Tim Waterson**, **Seth Davis**, and **Art Verdi** amazed the audience with their technical demonstrations. Davis set a new world record in the double-stroke category by playing 1,084 in sixty seconds. Mangini and Afanador battled and set two new records for matched-grip single strokes. Afanador beat his record of 1,165 single strokes with a new tally of 1,177. Not to be outdone, Mangini topped that score and became the new World's Fastest Drummer when he played a breathtaking 1,180 matched-grip single strokes in sixty seconds. Mangini has now set world records for the fastest matched grip, traditional grip, and bare-hands (no sticks) single strokes.

Mike Mangini sets a new world record of 1,180 single strokes in 60 seconds.

Johnny Rabb on his cocktail kit

Bill Meligari of High Bridge, New Jersey won the NAMM "Battle Of The Hands"



From left: Miss WFD Kristee Lively, Battle Of The Hands winner Bill Meligari, Battle Of The Feet Winner Mike Duncan, and Miss WFD Jessika Sands

with 1,019 single strokes in sixty seconds. The "Battle Of The Feet" title went to Mike Duncan of Canyon County, California for his score of 782 single strokes (on a double pedal) in sixty seconds. Over $12,000 in prizes were provided by **Pearl**, **Meinl**, **Pro-Mark**, **Axis**, **Remo**, **Thumpers**, **Drumometer**, **Mad Player**, **Warner Bros.**, **Grip Peddler**, and laser engraver **Tim Byrd**. For more information visit www.ExtremeSportDrumming.com.

Quick Beats

Les DeMerle
(Transfusion)

What are some of your favorite grooves?
Steve Gadd on the live version of "Call Me Al" (Paul Simon), Tony Williams on "Freedom Jazz Dance" (Miles Davis), David Garibaldi on "What Is Hip?" (Tower Of Power), Art Blakey on "Moanin'," Buddy Rich on "You Rotten Kid," and anything by Tito Puente.

What's your favorite TV theme music?
Anything by Quincy Jones, especially "Hikky-Burr" from *The Bill Cosby Show.*

If you could put together an imaginary superband, who would be in it?
Wynton Marsalis on trumpet, Phil Woods on alto sax, Joe Lovano on tenor sax, John Scofield on guitar, Benny Green on piano, Christian McBride on bass, and me on drums.

What song makes you say, "I wish I played on that one"?
"Sex Machine" by James Brown.

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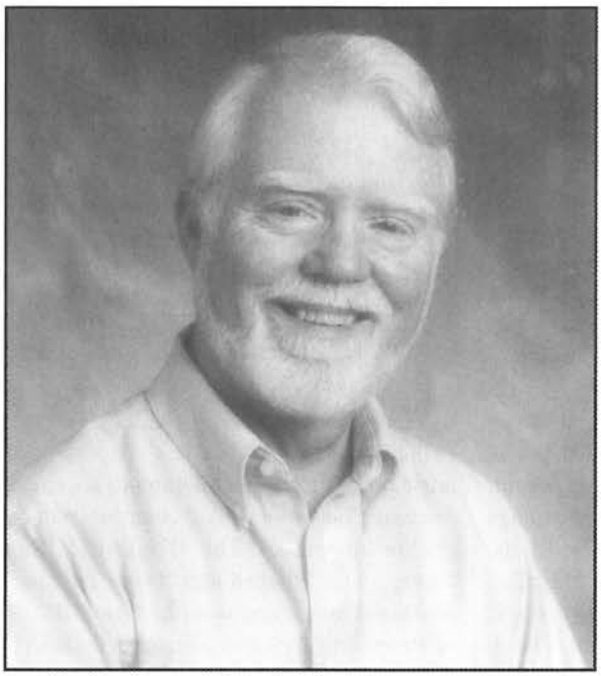

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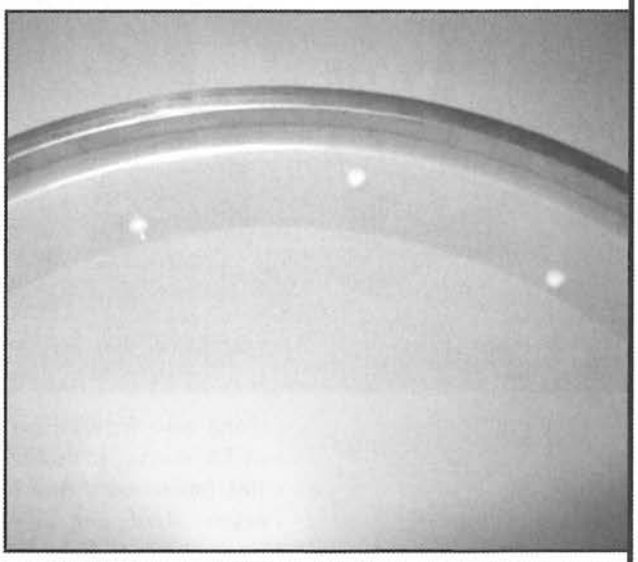

View of the "vented" muffling ring.
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John Guerin
Studio Superstar

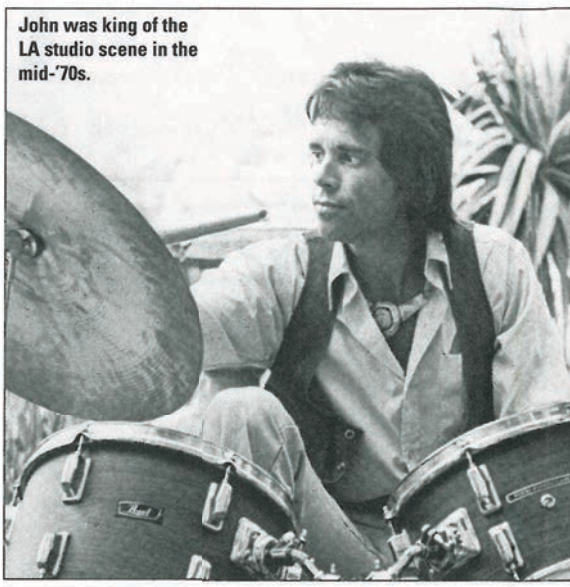
John Guerin, one of the most prolific and influential drummers in the history of the recording industry, died Monday, January 5 of heart failure, at the age of sixty-four.

Guerin is recognized as one of the musicians responsible for what many consider the Golden Age of recording in Los Angeles. His unique sound was a major element of hundreds of the most important records ever made.

The drummer was born in Hawaii and raised in San Diego, and began his playing career with Buddy DeFranco in 1960. He soon moved to Los Angeles, where he quickly established himself as a versatile drummer with a distinctive sound. That versatility led to appearances on recordings by artists as diverse as Frank Sinatra, The Byrds, Thelonious Monk, Lou Rawls, George Shearing, Peggy Lee, Ella Fitzgerald, Linda Ronstadt, Nelson Riddle, Joni Mitchell, and Frank Zappa. His discography (available at www.johnguerin.com) is staggering for the sheer number of important musical works on which he appeared.

Alex Solca

John also figured prominently on movie and TV scores, including the soundtracks for Clint Eastwood's film biography of Charlie Parker, *Bird*, and more recently the Jack Nicholson/Diane Keaton hit *Something's Gotta Give*. He also played on the famous title theme from the TV series *Hawaii Five-O*.


John was king of the LA studio scene in the mid-'70s.

In the 1970s, Guerin hit the touring circuit, traveling the world as founder and co-leader (with Tom Scott) of The L.A. Express, and with artist Joni Mitchell. In addition to his talents as a drummer, he was a skilled composer and producer. He co-wrote "The Hissing Of Summer Lawns" with Mitchell and "Don't Be Blue" with Michael Franks, and won the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS) MVP award for four years. He was also the author of a drum book called *Jazz + Rock = John Guerin*.

In the past few years John's projects included work with Oscar Peterson, Jon Faddis, Bobby Caldwell, Jimmy Heath, Ray Charles, Sonny Rollins, Justin Morell, Andreas Pettersson, David Basse, David Garfield, and Gary Lemel. His most recent album project was Lou Rawls' 2003 release, *Rawls Sings Sinatra*.

John loved to perform live. In addition to being a clinician for Drum Workshop, he appeared regularly with the jazz trios of Roger Kellaway and Mike Melvoin. Only a week prior to his passing, John performed with singer Steve Tyrell at the Catalina Bar & Grill in Hollywood. "John was an amazing spirit and an awesome force in music," said Tyrell. "He was recognized by all who truly knew music as one of the greatest drummers who ever lived."

Members of the Los Angeles music community gathered at the Sportsmen's Lodge in Studio City, California on Sunday, January 18 to pay musical tribute to John Guerin. Donations in his memory may be sent to his favorite charity, the Nevada S.P.C.A, 4800 West Dewey Drive, Suite D, Las Vegas, NV 89118.

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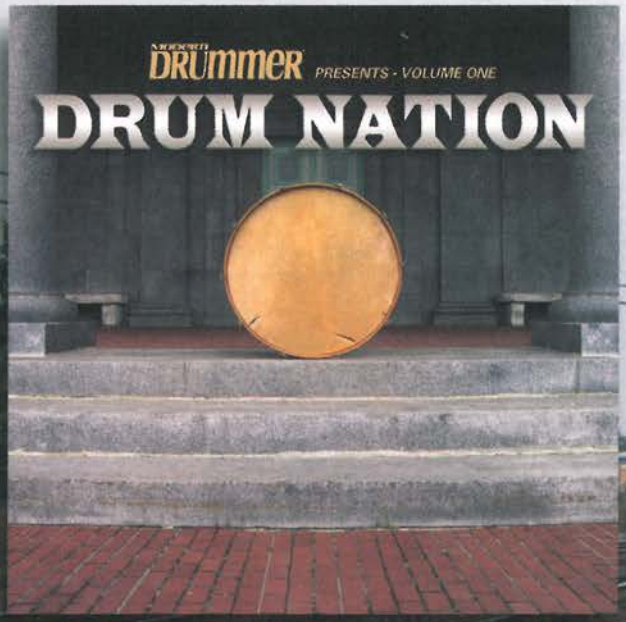

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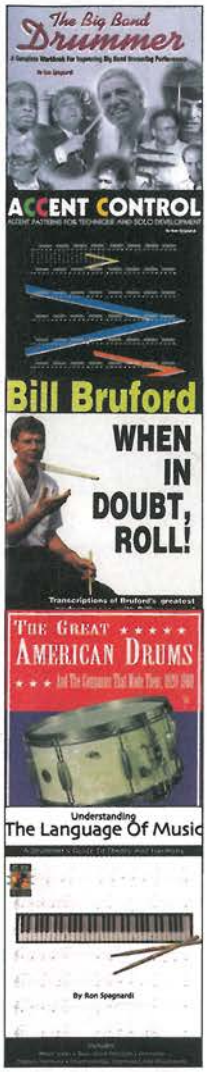

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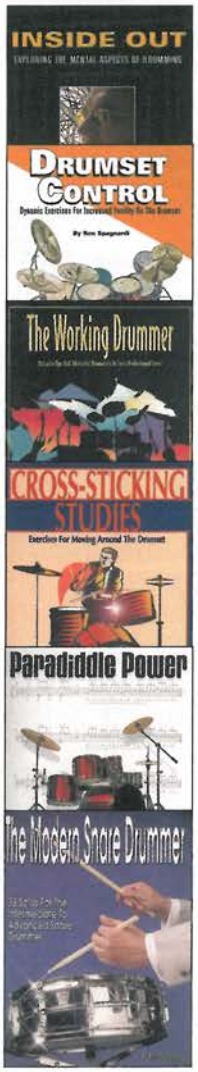

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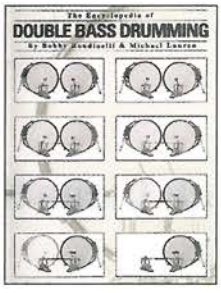

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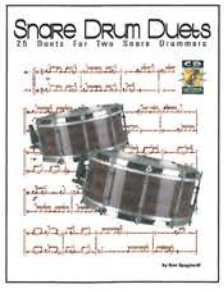
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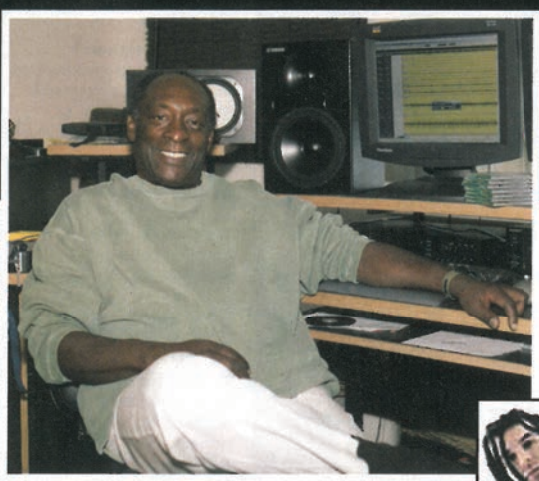

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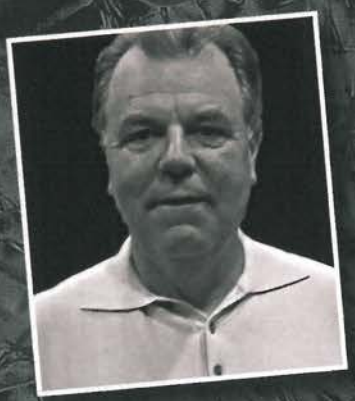

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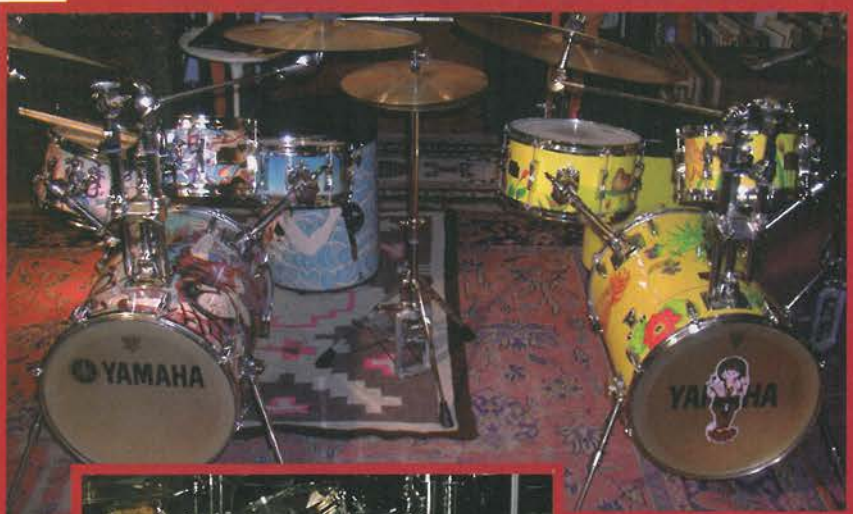

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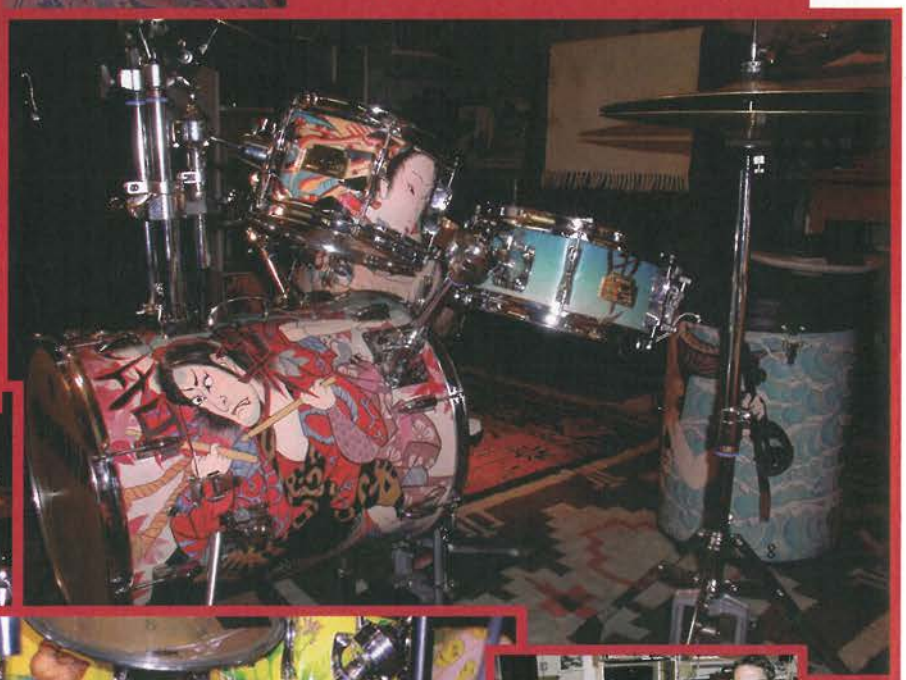
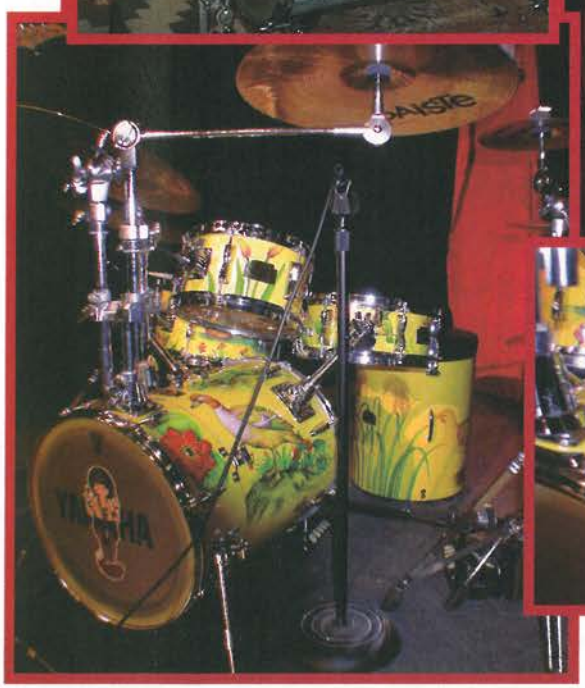
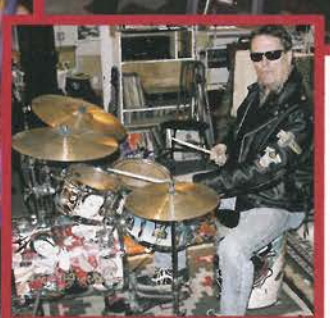
"I painted the HipGig with the Japanese design on a commission from a drummer from LA named Scott Goldman," says Prairie. "The other HipGig is my personal set. I designed it in collaboration with a wonderful painter in Bali. It was done last summer when I was appearing with a gamelan troop at the arts and music festival in Denpasar." For more information, go to www.prairieprince.com.







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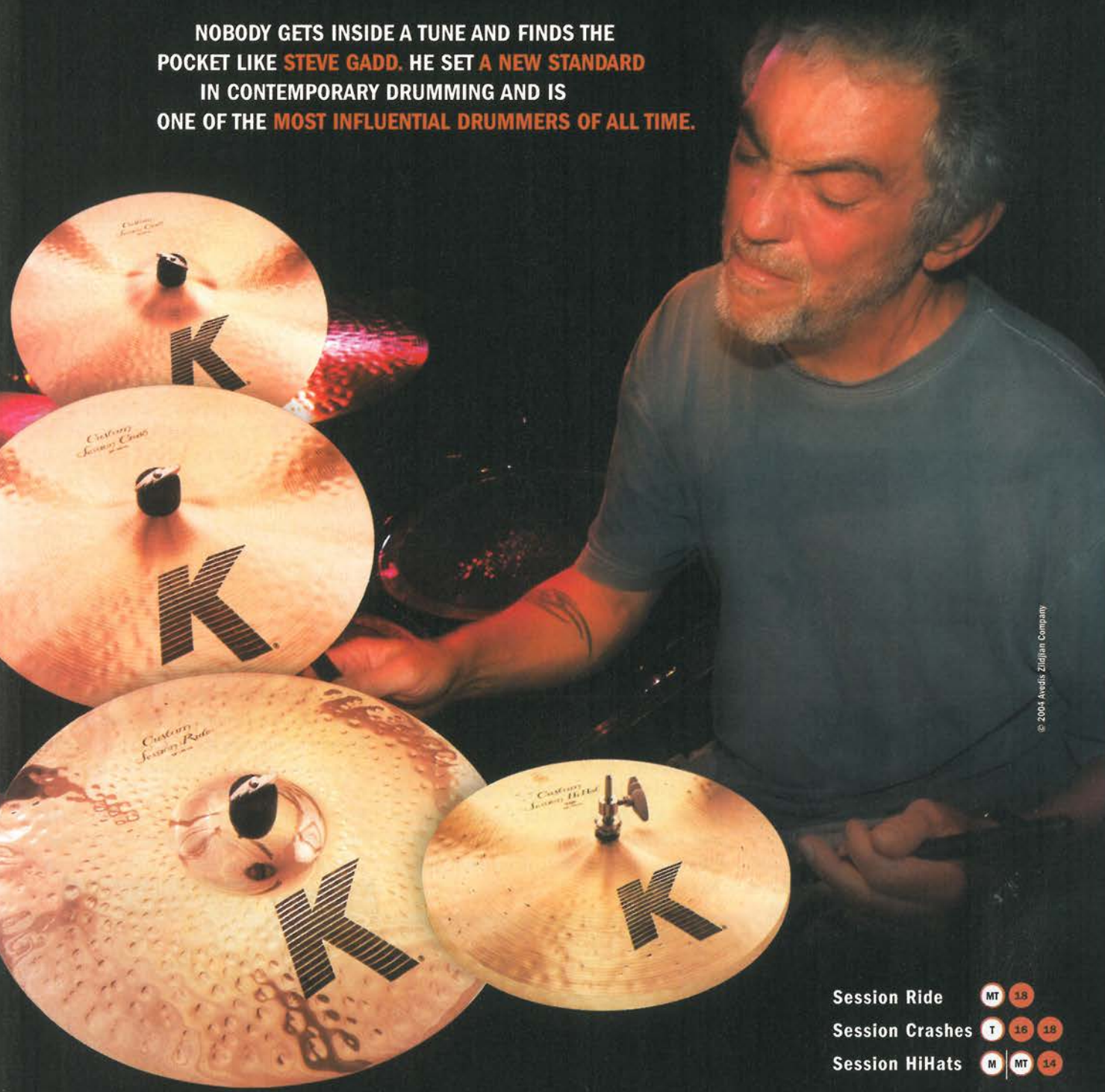

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